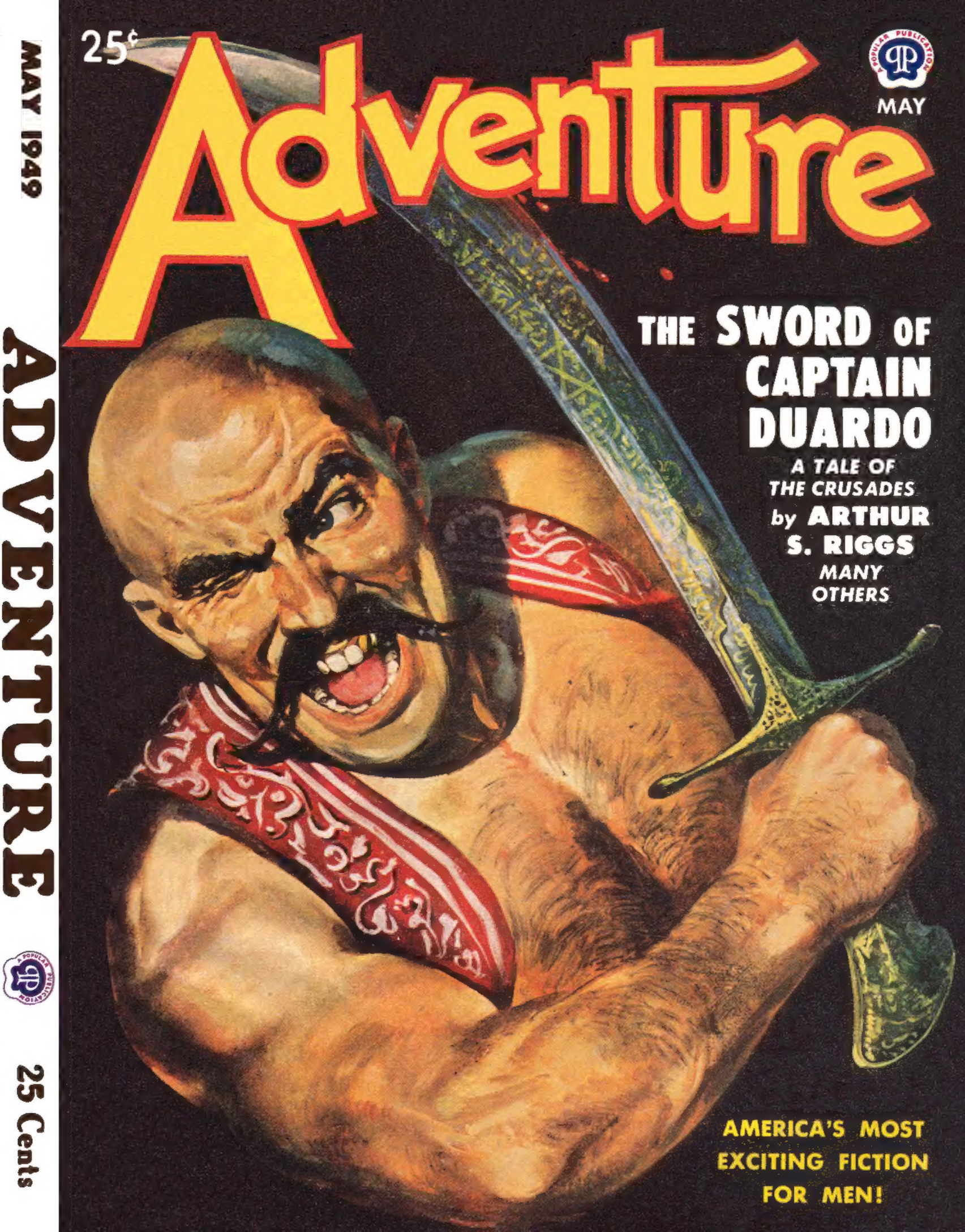
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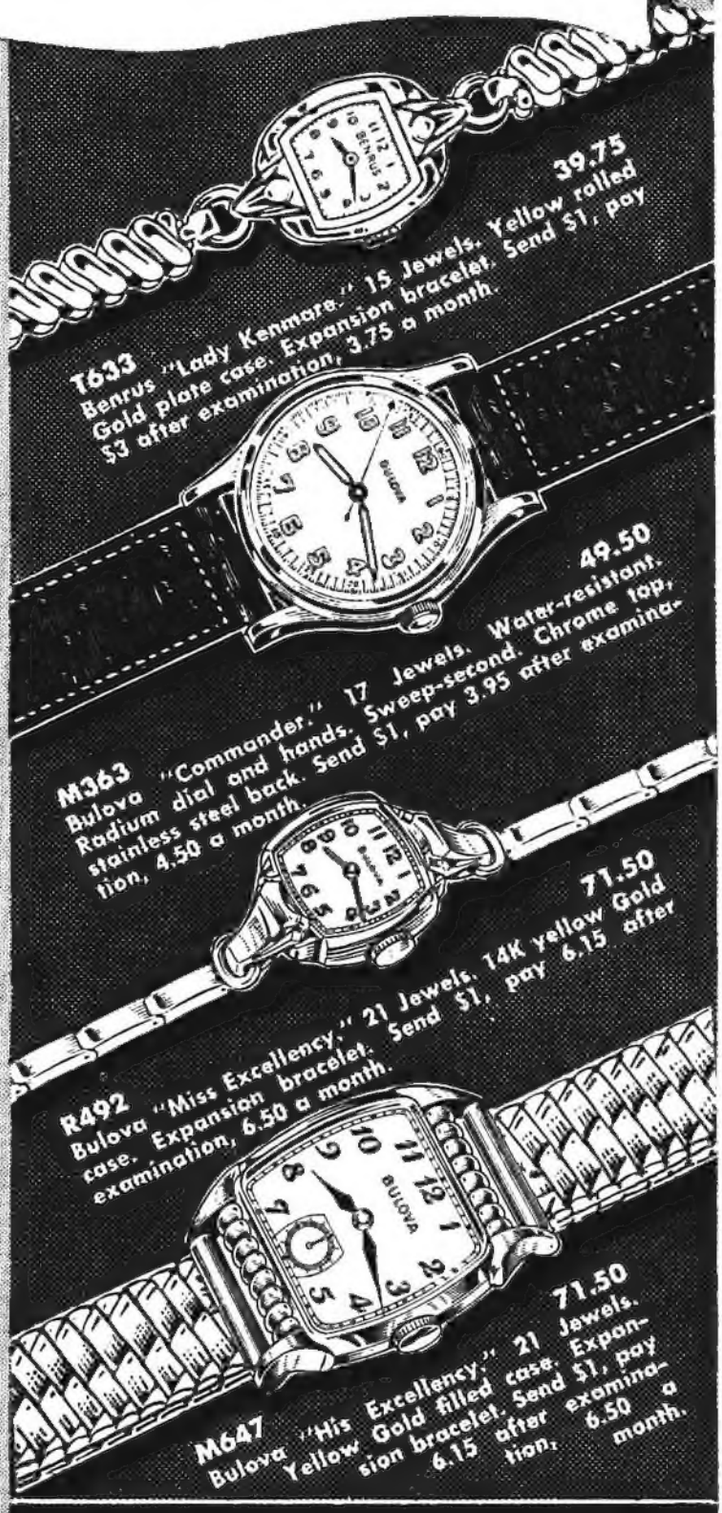
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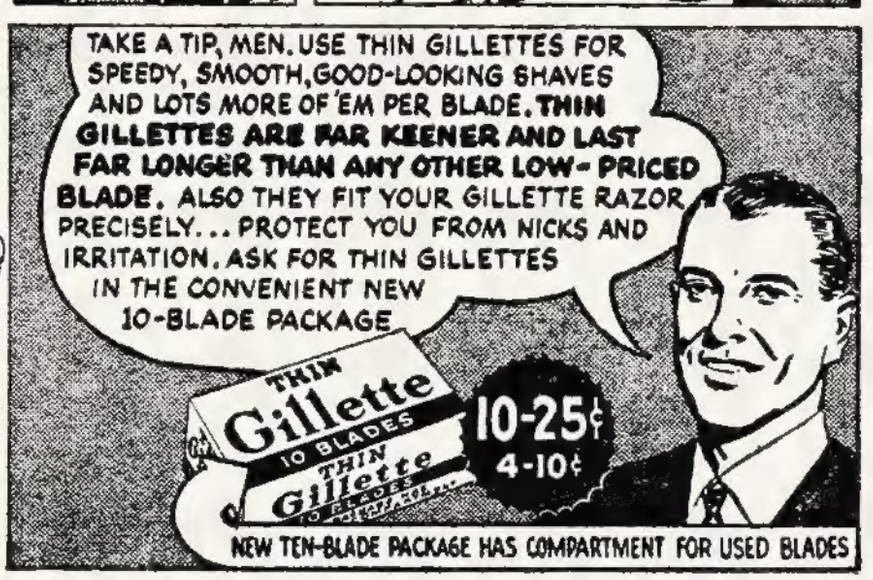
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Kendall W. Goodwyn, Editor

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NOTE: We offer this department to readers who wish to get in touch again with friends or acquaintances separated by years or chance. Give your own name and full address. Please notify *Adventure* immediately should you establish contact with the person you are seeking. Space permitting, each inquiry addressed to *Lost Trails* will be run in three consecutive issues. Requests by and concerning women are declined as not considered effective in a magazine published for men. *Adventure* also will decline any notice that may not seem a sincere effort to recover an old friendship, or that may not seem suitable to the editors for any other reason. No charge is made for publication of notices.

Thomas Cooley, 1426 First Ave., N.Y.C. would like to locate Joseph Marshall, formerly of 500 E. 73rd St., New York, working at that time as orderly in New York Hospital.

I am trying to find my brother, Benjamin Henderson, last known address North Grande Boulevard, Chicago. He would be in his sixties. Was in the restaurant business. Spencer W. Henderson, RFD, King St., Norfolk, Mass.

Would like information as to whereabouts of Johan Augustine Stinson, 5'9" tall, light brown hair, blue eyes. Age 57. Last heard from near Fargo, N. D. Lived at Colby, Kansas in 1926. Miles Augustine Stinson, 218 East Sherman, Hutchinson, Kans.

Anyone knowing the whereabouts of Jack Brewer, a native of Grand Rapids, Michigan, please communicate with C. Ray Robinson, 728 Barracks St., New Orleans, La. He is a close friend and his whereabouts became unknown to me since he sailed out of New Orleans on a merchant ship about two years ago. He is about 6' 3" tall, weighs 190 pounds, 23 years old, black, curly hair. Does some writing, likes to quoet poetry and sing Irish songs. Doesn't mind a good scrap once in a while.

Please help me locate my father, Grover McKenna. Worked for Standard Oil Co. mostly in Montana and Wyoming. Last seen 1935. He would now be about 55. Pfc. E. D. McKenna, R.A. 36902275, 63 Cml BD&M Co., APO 757, c/o PM, N.Y.

I would like to hear from anyone having information on present address of Fred Matheny, formerly of U. S. Army. When last heard from he was living with a sister in West Virginia. Please write Thomas J. Mulhern, 336 E. 166 St., Bronx, New York.

Clarence J. Carlton, 114 N. Sanchez St., Ocala, Fla., seeks whereabouts of his son Clarence J. Carlton, Jr. Last heard from in Boston, Mass., 1941.

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THE SWORD OF CAPTAIN DUARDO

A Tale of the Crusades

By ARTHUR S. RIGGS

Groans and curses filled the air as the shafts from the Pisan galley stuck into bodies and planks alike.

CAPTAIN DUARDO LOMELLINI of the Crossbowmen of San Giorgio leaned back against the low rail around the quarterdeck of the great-galley or longship *Trionfo di San Giorgio* and bellowed his delight in lusty song:

"E tanti sun le Zenoexe,
E per lo mondo si destexi,
Che unde li van o stan
Un atra Zenoa ge fan!"

("So many are the Genoese,
And so widespread throughout the world,
That wherever they go or stay
One finds another Genoa!")

Captain Piero Giovanbattista of the great-galley grinned cheerily back at him.

ILLUSTRATED BY L. STERNE STEVENS

The heavily loaded vessel careened to the freshening northwester until her oar-ports were almost awash. About the narrow decks lay the eleven hundred men of Messer Duardo's company and the veteran soldiery returning to the Holy Land for the Second Crusade—and the excellent looting and adventure and possible riches the wars against the Infidel provided for all who survived them. Most of the men were beyond words as the galley thrashed her hissing way along the creaming blue surges. Below in the tweendecks the rowers lolled at ease on their benches, their heavy sweeps trailed and lashed for the moment. Overhead, two huge straining lateens throbbed and hummed with the deep murmur of the wind.

Messer Piero spat overside. "By St. George," he cried as Messer Duardo finished his stanza, "with this wind we shall get you to Acre in record time. Your fellows will be glad to get there."

"They wouldn't do much now," admitted the soldier ruefully. "But wait till we get there! We'll show those damned Pisans which are the better soldiers."

Messer Piero swept the horizon. "St. George keep off any pirates until our fellows get their sea-legs. You know how well a seasick man fights."

Duardo pulled off his steel and leather headpiece. "I ought to, by Bacchus!" He parted the hair above his right ear and displayed a fearful scar. "Got that on the way out the first time. I evened things up at Acre, though." He fingered his heavy blade as he spoke, and began to bellow another stanza of his interminable song.

Captain Piero eyed him moodily. This weather was too good to last, the voyage going too smoothly not to presage disaster. Here he was with only about three hundred seamen and soldiers able to fight in such a sea, and eight hundred moaning, practically helpless archers, swordsmen, arquebusiers and others of no value at all in case of emergency. He was too deep-laden to run from anything fast, and his cargo of munitions and supplies for the newly captured Acre too precious to jeopardize by a standup fight except in case of the direst necessity. It might be true, as that old braggart Captain Maurizio di Pessagno had said when he came in with a convoy from Romania, that not a Saracen galley was anywhere about. But that didn't say they might not be overhauled by some Amalfitan or Pisan ready to play pirate at sight of a Genoese vessel.

The Captain was not happy, and went heavily into his sterncastle. There was nothing he could do but continue to crack on, although the *Trionfo* was groaning in every timber and reeling through the following seas with drunken abandon. He ought to have a convoy of at least two other longships as powerful as his own.

A lusty hail from the fighting-top on the mainmast brought him out of the sterncastle like a jack-in-the-box when the lid snaps up. The sailors at the vast twin steering-oars forgot their straining work and looked up, letting the wallowing *Trionfo* fall off with a crash as a sea caught her under the narrow counter and set her shivering in every timber. Messer Piero cursed them savagely and called aloft, "What do you see, fellow?"

"A great-galley, Signor Capitano. She sails to cut us off. There, a league off the port bow."

"What flag is she?"

The lookout strained his eyes again. His words came faintly down through the thrumming of the wind as it spilled from the leech of the great mizzen lateen. "The White Madonna, I think."

"*Gesu* guard us now!" cried Messer Piero. "Pisan!"

MESSER DUARDO stared anxiously at the distant sail rapidly growing larger. She was still hull-down from the deck, but the glistening bulge of her sky-scraping lateen showed her to be big enough to provide a worthy fight. He turned inquiringly to Messer Piero. "We fight her, of course?"

"St. George, no!" barked the distracted shipmaster. "We must run if we can. Remember, Acre is waiting for our supplies and money. I dare not risk a fight. *Nocchiero!*" he cried to the steersman-in-chief. "Let her fall off a bit. If yonder fellow changes his course, we shall know."

The *Trionfo* wallowed heavily and fell off before the wind, with every timber and every strand of rigging shrieking its protest. There was heavy silence along the

windward rail as both the captains watched the distant vessel anxiously. For some time she held on steadily; then they could see the position of her big lateen change slightly as the sunlight on it shifted position. She had eased her tacks and sheets a little. Not a doubt of it: she was running down to head the *Trionfo* off. Messer Duardo fingered his baldric, and his hand played again about the hilt of his heavy sword. If the stranger was a Pisan, he would fight with a will, though he would much have preferred avoiding her. There was little enough profit to be had in capturing a ship so close to her home port, especially if, as seemed likely, she was a naval craft and likely to prove a tough customer. Damn them, these Pisan dogs not only could fight, but they somehow managed to get all the breaks whenever they met a Genoese vessel. He turned to speak to Messer Piero, but the sailor was not there.

Down on the long runway between the banks of oarsmen, he was talking furiously to the boatswain, gesticulating now at the enemy, now about the galley. Messer Duardo watched with increasing uneasiness. A fight was good, of course, and nobody could ask a better fight than with the hated Pisans. But after all, if a rascally shipmaster had the belly of a toad under his belt, one might well wish a priest was handy so he could confess. He was very much afraid Messer Piero was yellow. That talk about responsibility certainly sounded like it. The stranger was boiling along fast now; he could see her long, slim hull clearly coming down on them hand over hand, rolling and yawing fearfully in the trough as she rode ducklike over the surges through which the heavy *Trionfo* was crashing. No chance to avoid anything as light and fast as that. Well, he had better see to getting as many of his men ready to die as possible. He clambered stiffly over to where they lay in retching misery.

His old sergeant, Gianni, eyed him grimly. Already he was buckling his leather corselet, reinforced with strips of limber steel. "Well," growled the veteran, "do we die today, my master?"

"Hell has plenty of room for Pisans," retorted Messer Duardo. "Some of us will go along to show them the way."

Gianni snorted, and buckled a strap viciously. "Some! Hmph! Not half our fellows can stand."

"Wait till the darts come over, my Gianni. They won't want to be pinned to the deck like flies. They'll fight—fight like Genoese!"

"Catapult crews!" bellowed Messer Piero out of the confusion in the tween-decks. "Clear for action! Port forward balista! Cast off your breechings. Open magazines. Arquebusiers stand by. Man the tops. Cook, break out the lime-barrels and the liquid soap. Sergeants, open all magazines and pass up stones and darts for the main battery. Lively now! Stand by the braces. Helm, there! She will try to ram and then lay us aboard. Stand by when I raise my arm to throw her up in the wind and ram if we can. If we can't do that, we can break the shock. Oarsmen, stand by your lashings and be ready to out oars. They haven't touched their lashings. Trumpeter, ready with the standard. Drummers stand by to beat to action."

The galley quivered with the flurry and noise of preparation. Messer Piero was everywhere at once. Messer Duardo, verbally lashing his seasick men into protecting themselves if they could not do much actual fighting, had time to watch the distribution of arms and armor, the coiling up of the windlasses that would hurl enormous catapult stones at the enemy first, and later shower them with liquid soap and clouds of quicklime. On came the flashing great-galley, now bearing down with the glitter of arms in the sunshine. From the short staff on her sterncastle there whipped out the great ensign of Pisa bearing the White Madonna that carried terror far and wide to Italian as well as to Moorish hearts. Messer Piero signalled the trumpeter, and in response the huge crimson banner with the golden griffon blazed a flaming patch against the vivid sky from the *Trionfo's* towering poop. Faintly over the water came a derisive howl, followed by a stone that whirled harmlessly between the masts and made a tremendous splash in the sea beyond.

"Forward port balista!" yelled Messer Piero. "Aim carefully. Fire when she is rising. Now!"

Swinging smartly, the man in charge of

the weapon struck the trigger with his mallet. The sharp click and rattle of the windlass cranks ended with the loud whirr as the released cords hurled a fifty-pound stone through the air. As the *Trionfo* rose drunkenly on the swell, everyone could see it sail majestically over the two hundred yards separating the straining craft, and crash squarely down in the midst of the crowded Pisan benches between decks. Instantly the air was full of a bitter cloud of darts, as the enemy loosed his entire broadside. Ugly little tufted shafts stuck into bodies and planks alike. Groans and curses filled the air. The man standing beside Messer Piero caught one full in the chest, clapped his hands wildly to the wound and screamed as he fell, vomiting blood. Messer Duardo, a few steps away, coolly let down his visor, plucked a dart out of the leather exterior of his corselet, and wound up his crossbow carefully.

"Back into the womb that spawned you, little sweetheart," he purred, setting the dart carefully on the string and aiming at the helmsman on the enemy's starboard quarter. Twang! went his piece. The helmsman leaped high into the air and fell overboard. The big galley yawed wildly before another man could spring to the untended tiller and bring her back on her course, and the volley of darts and arrows loosed at the instant she fell away whistled harmlessly through the lateens and astern of the laboring *Trionfo*.

CRAFTILY, Messer Piero changed his course and braced his clumsy yards to try to work to windward, both to avoid being rammed and to get a chance to use his soap and lime. But the Pisan was swifter and more easily handled. His fire was fast, but wild, and comparatively few of the Genoese had been killed, though a goodly number lay cursing and trying awkwardly to bind up nastily torn wounds. A shower of stones rained down and lay about the decks, making footing uncertain. Saving his own shafts for emergency, Messer Duardo jested grimly with his men as he plucked the Pisan darts out of the decks about him and shot them rapidly back at their senders. Most of the Crossbowmen of St. George had staggered to their feet somehow, and though still pallid and retching, stood to their bows and did heavy execution. The Genoese fire was galling, and so many Pisans were down that the gleaming galley looked considerably less crowded.

"All hands!" shouted Messer Piero suddenly. "Up helm! Quick! Stand by to repel boarders!"

Rearing down like a hungry monster, the Pisan came crashing over to ram and board. Her bulwarks swarmed with howling men brandishing their swords and pikes. Sluggishly the deep-laden *Trionfo* answered her helm, and a favoring sea catching her astern as she began to swing, hurled her suddenly around just in time to save her solid timbers from the dagger-like *sperone* or beak of the charging Pisan.

With a grinding crash the two galleys rolled together, splintering the lashed oars like toothpicks. The swells dropped away, and they rolled apart, a hundred Pisans who had leaped as the crash came, falling into the foaming swirl of waters and broken oars. Back again the craft rolled. They did not crash. Caught between them the luckless hundred screamed once. The veterans of a score of such fights sickened at the greasy thud. Somebody threw a grappling-iron; another, and another, and Pisan and Genoese were locked firmly in a grapple to the death.

Howling, cursing, praying, a thousand Pisans tumbled over their rail upon the lower deck of the *Trionfo*. For a moment it was any man's fight along the rails. Inch by inch the sturdy Genoese gave way to the greater numbers and the ferocity of the Pisans. The tweendecks were a shambles, red and gasping. From the maintop of the *Trionfo* an arquebusier sniped steadily at the giant Pisan leader, a black-bearded swordsman in a scarlet surcoat and white trousers. At last he caught him squarely between the shoulders with a heavy quarrel from his arquebus and knocked him flat upon his face. His heavy two-handed sword flew from his grasp. Two Genoese hacked viciously at his armored neck and shoulders. With a roar of anger, the Pisan leaped up, grabbed his attackers by the necks, and dashed their heads together with a crash that split the helmet of one. Hurling their senseless bodies aside, he sprang for his sword, and again slashed his bloody way through the swarming tangle toward Messer Duardo.

Messer Piero was down. The *nocchieri* had all fallen into the sea, and the two galleys, yawing and staggering, blew along together, grinding up and down savagely. Messer Duardo had abandoned his crossbow long since, and with some of his men at his back hacked his way valiantly into the Pisans, shouting for St. George and Genoa. His blade dripped ruddily. Pantingly he warned his men, "Kill! Kill for St. George and Genoa! It's Scornigiani the pirate. We'll all be sold for slaves if we don't kill them all!"

A tremendous flail-like sweep of a clubbed pike from one side caught him on the temple and knocked him a dozen feet into the scuppers. The tide of battle rolled over him and swept its roaring way aft, the black pirate wielding his tremendous blade with machine-like precision and deadliness. Penned against the walls of the sterncastle, the last group of Genoese still able to fight threw down their swords. Scornigiani regarded them wrathfully. Resting upon the hilt of his sword, he glanced from them toward what was left of his own crew, and the writhing, groaning, red-stained abattoir of the decks.

"By the saints!" he swore. "Another fight like this and Scornigiani will need a whole new crew. Who would have thought," he said to his second in command, the armor-cased, squat little *scriba* or combination of lieutenant and ship's yeoman, "that a shipload of swinish Genoese merchants would fight like this?"

"Merchants!" mocked the *scriba*. "Messer Luigi, most of these men are veteran soldiers of the Crusades. Don't you see their Crosses?"

Staring about him astonished, the pirate nodded slowly and took in a gasping lungful of salt air. *"Per Bacco!* When I fight, I see only swords. Yes—crusaders!" He chanced to look at Messer Duardo, just pulling himself to a sitting position and holding his cracked head together with a groan. The huge Cross was plain on his surcoat. "You, fellow! Who are you? Who are these men who dared to fight Luigi Scornigiani of Pisa?"

Messer Duardo's head still wobbled about in circles, his eyes would not focus, his legs refused to bear his weight, and the roaring of hell crashed in his ears. But he heard the question, and his native hatred of anything Pisan burnt away whatever caution he might have had in better circumstances.

"Dog of a Pisan! Pirate! Filthy despoiler of decent people!" he snarled, using dialect because he knew Scornigiani would find it hard to understand and be angered. "You bloody pirates—you ask me who I am? I am Captain Duardo Lomellini, commanding the Company of the Crossbowmen of San Giorgio, crusader, and bound for Acre to show cowards of Pisans how to avenge the insults to our beloved Christ in the land of the Infidel." He crossed himself piously, spat out a tooth which had somehow wandered out of place in his aching jaw, and scowled challenge. "Beast! Pig! Let me get my breath and I will kill you! Ho, Crossbowman! Help me up. Give me my sword, somebody. Body of—!" He slumped weakly back into the scuppers and lapsed into unconsciousness again. Scornigiani scowled and went slowly over to look down at him. Methodically and accurately he kicked him from foot to head, crashing his heavy seaboot against legs and side, arms and head, while the raging Genoese looked on silent, not daring to speak.

"Scriba, muster all hands. Find out how many men we have lost. Search this ship and find out what she carries. Throw the dead overboard, and any wounded that are not worth curing to sell. Tie up that son of a thousand bastards there in the scuppers. Smartly, now. Turn to, everybody."

SCORNIGIANI entered the sterncastle and rummaged in Messer Piero's cabin. A whoop of savage delight announced his discovery of the chests of money and the ship's manifest and articles, with the statement of the merchants' goods in the hold. Here was a prize worth fighting for! New galley just off the ways, two chests full of metal currency good anywhere in the Mediterranean, ample ship's stores, rich bales and bundles of negotiable goods, fifty merchants and twelve hundred fighting men bound for the Holy Wars, great stores of munitions and war engines for Acre! He was still gloating over his extraordinary luck when the *scriba* came in with a doleful expression.

"Signor Capitano," he said grimly, "we have need to win great booty to make up for our losses. Out of thirteen hundred men we had this morning, scarce nine hundred are alive and unhurt now."

Scornigiani swore zestfully. "One in three dead!"

"One in three," assented the lieutenant somberly. "Our best, too. The Genoese lost about the same. We have counted between seven and eight hundred men fit to sell. Of the fifty merchants they say were aboard, only thirty are left, but they ought to bring heavy ransoms."

"What damage to the ships?" Scornigiani demanded.

"Very little, sir. Both are leaking badly, but that can be repaired in ease once we get home. The wind is blowing up a gale. You had better come out and set the course. We return to Pisa . . .?"

The pirate strode out on deck. The sun was gone. Thick green haze obscured the horizon. Still lashed together, but separated now by heavy buffers, Genoese *Trionfo* and Pisan *Dragone* rolled and labored. A single glance told the shipmaster the futility of trying to work back to Pisa with half a gale in his teeth, a heavy sea rolling in and every prospect of dirty weather ahead. No telling how long this vile wind would last, and the oars of both craft were floating miles away in matchwood. They must run for it; trust to luck not to reach the dreaded Strait of Messina before they could make harbor safely. Any port would do for two leaking ships, both shorthanded.

"Divide the prisoners," Scornigiani commanded tersely. "You take the *Trionfo* and follow me south. Divide our own men. You take the best. Chain the prisoners. If we can put in safely before we reach the Strait, we'll round the southeastern corner of Sicily, put into Syracuse and sell these Genoese dogs to the Saracens. They will probably want everything. Tell the men we have a rich prize. Promise every man a pound of pepper for today's work besides his regular share."

"Messer Luigi! A pound! Of long-pepper? Why—"

"Out of my own profits," snarled the pirate. *"Avanti!* Be quick! We shall have a whole gale in another hour. Are all the dead thrown over?"

"And all the badly wounded," shouted the *scriba,* as he scrambled for the rail and yelled to the men.

There was much to be done, and both galleys had to be snugged down to ride the increasing fury of the gale. Both huge yards of the *Trionfo* had to be fished where catapult stones had cracked them. The decks were a horrible mess of clotted blood and debris. Broken weapons lay everywhere. A barrel of lime that had broken loose with the rolling of the galley had burst and added its steaming, charring fury to the littered deck. The men were at a thousand tasks at once, the carpenter and his mates making sure first of all of the wounded spars. Gloomily, Scornigiani surveyed the battered vessels. The catapults had done considerable damage, and his own sterncastle was almost demolished. A splintered gap in the port quarter of the *Trionfo* showed where one of his own missiles had crashed through. With the rapidly mounting sea, they must hurry. He fell to with his men.

Two hours later the galleys reefed down to almost bare yards, wallowed southward before the gale. The *Dragone* led, showing a lanthorn in the sheltered after port of her sterncastle. Wildly it danced over the hissing surges, now tossed to the stars, now vanishing in the black and white of a roaring trough. Both craft leaked badly, and the pumps broke the backs of the straining prisoners as they struggled in relays all through the night.

Just before daybreak they raised Stromboli, intermittently spouting its lurid warning in the blackness of the gale, an exaggerated Roman candle whose sparks spat venomously straight upward before trailing off to leeward in a rain of red. Scornigiani crossed himself and let the *Dragone* wallow ahead. If he could hold a course midway between Scylla and Charybdis—and with this gale and sea to help him he might be able to—he would avoid the perilous eddies and find calmer going in the Gulf of Messina just around the corner of Sicily. Syracuse would be only a day's sail distant and there, in the great Moorish market, he could find ready takers for captives, cargo and galley itself. What if the Pope had banned the sale of shipping and nautical stores to the Infidel? Let the priests tend to their chanting! Sea-

faring was a man's work. He had the right to dispose as he saw fit of what he had won by risking his life.

CHAPTER II

GALLEY SLAVE

AND SO the *Dragone* came eventually into Syracuse harbor, battered, wearied to exhaustion by the long struggle, but ready to trade. After her trailed the all but waterlogged *Trionfo,* her decks still stained darkly fore and aft, her stumps of oars long since thrown overboard, her great mizzenyard cracked and sprung beyond repair, and the Pisan White Madonna at her stern instead of the scarlet banner of Genoa. A Saracenic coastguard boat skimmed out toward the newcomers and harsh voices told them where to anchor, under the guidance of a pilot whose black beard wagged goatishly as he conned the *Dragone* to her moorings. From another shore boat that whisked up alongside emerged a lean but powerful Moor in a green turban and immaculate white *burnus.* Saluting Scornigiani curtly he gave him the everlasting peace of Allah the merciful, and sternly demanded his name and business.

Messer Luigi smiled. "I am Luigi Scornigiani, pirate, of Pisa, here to sell to your merchants certain stout Christian slaves, a fine galley and a goodly cargo of the merchandise of the north."

The Moor scowled. "Of what country are the slaves?"

"Of Genoa. Among them are some thirty merchants who should be able to ransom themselves handsomely," he added, as a further bait. "Come into my sterncastle and behold the ship's papers."

"Christian dog! Am I a merchant, to chaffer with you over a filthy pack of slaves and some plunder? Bring your wares to the market and deal with merchants and slave-traders no better than yourself!"

Scornigiani shrugged. Insults from a turbanned Moor meant nothing to him, and theology was the last thing in the world for him to squabble over with anyone—unless it were a Genoese. He bowed, and the details were quickly settled. The haughty Moor snapped directions about mooring the *Trionfo* at the ancient Greek quay beside the custom house.

Aching and sore from head to foot with one vast agony, sea-salt festering in his wounds, and still lashed fast where the *scriba* had tied him while still unconscious after Scornigiani had kicked him thoroughly, Messer Duardo watched the proceedings dolefully. The swarms of Moorish longshoremen crowding like ants into the hold to lug out the bales and chests of merchandise and bulky cargo, singing shrill, monotonous songs as they toiled, did his cracked pate no great good. And when the slave-dealers came swarming on board to look over and estimate the value of the human merchandise, he was almost sorry for himself. If that Pisan swine had only kicked him a little harder, he would not now have to go on the block, where he had put so many himself. He had never before thought much about how it hurts to be felt of, stared at, commented on, bid for as a bit of salable goods, much too high in price but useful, perhaps, for limited purposes.

A slave-dealer turned to Scornigiani and waved both hands contemptuously at the surly array of prisoners marshalled at last on the wharf under guard of heavily armed pirates. "Rabble!" he sneered. "You call these good for slaves? Why, Christian, they are almost worthless. I wouldn't buy them at all only that you are a brave man and a good friend."

"As we both believe in God," stormed Scornigiani, "these are the flower of all Genoa, the finest fighting men in Liguria. We had to kill four hundred of them to capture their ship! Rabble? Blood of God!"

The Moor smiled at his enthusiasm. Here indeed was a man who knew how to bargain. "Who is their head man?"

"Yonder fellow with the cracked head," Scornigiani replied. Ah, now there you have a man worthy to fight a Saracen! The fool was wounded and all but dead, yet he tried to attack me—me, Luigi Scornigiani—with his bare hands! Would you dare to do that, Signor Merchant?"

Carefully the Moor examined Messer Duardo. He rubbed the salt from his festering wounds to make sure they were not too deep, but drew only a snarl of anger

rather than pain from Duardo's dry and twisted lips. He punched him in the barrel chest, tested the bulging muscles of arm and thigh, jerked his mouth open roughly and looked at his teeth, smiling happily as Duardo cursed him in the choicest soldier obscenities years of camp and field had taught him.

"You see?" Scornigiani prodded. "He knows he will be made a galley slave, and he will pull a mighty oar, yet he is not afraid of you nor of the Padishah himself. His men are all like him."

The Moor considered thoughtfully, letting his gaze roam over the sorry, salt-encrusted lot, dirty, unshaven, stinking as only sailors of that age could stink of garlic and pitch, sweat and dried blood. "Well," he said at last, "I will probably have to feed them for months before I can dispose of such a poor lot. I really do not want or need them. I'll give you half a shipload of onions for the lot."

"What!" exploded the pirate, beside himself at such an offer. "None hundred men, and only half a ship full of onions! Am I crazy?"

"You must have been to fight for such a lot as these," was the cool reply. "I'm giving you too much, at that."

"God forgive all my sins!" Scornigiani wailed. As suddenly he snapped back into energy. *"Scriba!"* he bawled. "Oh, *Scriba!"*

"Signor Capitano!"

"Drive all these fellows back on board the *Dragone* and tie them up. We have slaves for sale, but there is no market here." To the Moor, who still smiled craftily, he added in a growl, "Their ship is yours, and the goods. Your people have paid fairly for them. I will take these slaves to a market where they know the value of men. Don't think that I and my men couldn't storm your city right now if we wanted to. Your fleet is away. How would you like to be taken to Pisa and sold yourself?"

"Bismallah—if God wills," returned the Moor piously. "But in His mercy He does not will it this time. You are a good bargainer for a Christian, but I would not say too much about what I would do before the Emir's Captain of the Guard. We have about four thousand veterans here. Perhaps when they had finished, I should find myself buying an insolent dog of a renegade who pretends to be a Christian. Your own Faith forbids you to trade with us Moslems, to sell us ships or arms or anything else we need; yet here you sail right into one of our ports and like the vile apostate that you are, try to frighten a good Moslem. Shaitan fly off with you! I will raise my bid to one full shipload of onions. That is my last word. Take it or carry off your mangy curs!"

With a fine show of dignity, he wrapped his flowing white *burnus* more tightly about his broad shoulders and stalked away a few paces. Scornigiani swore lustily and strode after the *scriba*. Furiously he argued in protest at such a ridiculous price. He would storm their verminous hole of a port, put every man to the sword and rape everything female from six to sixty! He would avenge every insult to the Christian Faith ever uttered by any Moor, he would plunder and burn and ravage, he would— Placidly the *scriba* listened until the paroxysm of his rage flickered down to an ominous grumble.

"Signor Capitano mine," his second in command finally said quietly, "we have won a great prize and we have sold it for a great price. Again Pisa has done much hurt to Genoa. But God wills it that no man shall have his full desire. Take the Moor's price. A ship full of onions is not much for nine hundred slaves; but Amalfi is very short of onions, and we can barter these for the silks of Romania and Greece." He gestured vigorously as Scornigiani tried scowlingly to interrupt. "And who shall prevent men who travel north from telling in Genoa how the Pisan Scornigiani, to show his contempt for Genoese fighting men, sold nine hundred of the best of them for mere onions? Think well of that, my Captain and give the Moor his way of them. If we take them back to sea we shall only have to 'send them home in their boots' [make them walk the plank.—Ed.] There is small profit in drowning them all, and considerable labor. We may even be able to make the Amalfitani give us metal coins for fresh onions—they have no sense in such matters."

The idea was slow in penetrating the pirate's none too gifted head, but when he pictured the futile rage of Genoa at the

news that a Genoese soldier's worth could be measured in onions, he threw back his black head and guffawed until the tears streamed down into his beard, and the Moor turned to stare at this insane Christian dog. Men for onions! Men for onions! St. George, but that was a good one for Genoa! "Ho, Moor!" he bellowed, suddenly bubbling over with friendliness. "I accept your offer, bad though it is. Take the lot, and load us up with your finest onions. Put a few bags of rotten ones on deck at the last. Them I would send to Genoa as the price of this fellow Duardo here. Haw, haw, haw!"

CHAINED loosely to his bench in the *Sultan* galley, Messer Duardo felt himself in grave plight indeed. He was sore as a boil all over; sore as two boils. He ached from his toenails to his hair, as only a new galley-slave can ache. He had pulled at the gigantic sweep to which he and two other luckless captives were chained until he could neither stand nor exert an ounce of pull. He had fainted standing up from sheer fatigue, and his two fellow slaves had resented his weakness and jeered until the boatswain's mate with the whip and the vinegar cut his back to ribbons and brought him gasping and moaning back to agonized consciousness. Hell surely could be no worse than this, and he vaguely mouthed a prayer through his agonies for death. Better be killed than suffer this way. He fell across the oar again.

Half a dozen other new slaves, unused to the frightful work, were distributed among the veterans whose muscles had become inured to the strain of rowing for hours. Their weakness told upon the rhythmic sweep of the 35-foot oars, and the fast *Sultan* wobbled a little in her pace in spite of the efforts of the time-setter with his drum to give the men the beat so sharply they would automatically follow it. Astern under an awning the bearded Emir in command looked his anxiety and disgust. A Venetian fleet was in the offing somewhere, and the *Sultan* was carrying dispatches which must reach Alexandria in the shortest possible time. The slaves could not be spared, and as there was no wind, they pulled steadily for twenty endless hours; pulled until even the sturdiest of them had to be revived with the whip, and the new men swayed back and forth like dangling sacks of putty. The brutal Mediterranean sun blazed down upon them ferociously, and when, as the Emir had feared, a great Venetian naval galley appeared and ran swiftly down upon them on its hundred and twenty legs, there was not enough energy left in the oars to make even an attempt at maneuvering.

With a bitter curse, the Emir changed his course and took the chance of head-on collision. As the vessels crashed together, the *Sultan's* oarsmen dropped at their sweeps and lay inert. Fighting with the despair of trapped tigers, the Moslem soldiery leaped forward calling upon Allah and swinging their light scimitars. The armored Venetians wasted little precious breath in shouting. There were old scores to wipe out, and with one yell of *Sammarco—Vinegia!"* they met despair with fury. The conflict was as short as it was bloody. The scimitars could not cut through steel corselets, but the heavy blades of Venice did frightful work on human tissues.

Messer Duardo slowly regained his senses to find his face covered with fresh blood; still dripping down upon him monotonously. He was lying flat upon his back over the bench. Above him, projecting from the narrow deck, lay the body of a soldier, the head almost severed by a swordstroke. With a groan Duardo turned his head far enough to escape the maddening drip, and to look for his two companions, veterans both. One was grotesquely bent into a circle, his head smashed by a catapult stone. The other, a huge, squatty Greek, was twisted around, back to the stump of the broken-off sweep, staring with sightless eyes at an arm sheared off at the shoulder. Duardo swore softly. What had happened to himself? Where was he wounded, and how? Gingerly he flexed his muscles. One by one they obeyed him, creaking and agonizing, but sound. He struggled weakly to turn over and crawl to his feet. A Venetian armorsmith with shears and a sledge came along the line of bloodied benches. As he saw Durado stir feebly, he laughed.

"Sammarco! Here is one alive! Still

there a minute, and I'll have your chains off. The Magnificent Messer Romolo would have a look at all the Christian slaves."

"Who are you?" Duardo's cracked lips mouthed the words with difficulty. "What is your ship?"

"Ha!" exclaimed the armorsmith, pausing in his work to stare. "Genoese! I would know that bastard dialect anywhere. Who am I, fellow? I am Vittorio, chief armorsmith of the Venetian galley *Santissima Trinita,* one hundred and sixty oars when fully manned, Captain the Magnificent Messer Romolo Dandolo commanding. We are the flagship-cruiser of Messer Adriano Zeno's big squadron, out to catch Saracens. Who are you?"

Messer Duardo brightened a little, but groaned as the shackles were roughly struck from his waist, and the Venetian pushed him upright.

"I am a crusader," he began.

"By all the saints!" howled the Venetian. "You look it, by Saint Mark! I suppose you command a great company of crusaders, too!"

"I have two hundred of the stoutest fellows that ever sailed from Genoa—the Company of the Crossbowmen of San Giorgio, bound for Acre, and—"

Chief Armorsmith Vittorio swept off his headpiece and bowed low. "Messer Captain, I salute a great man and a wonderful commander! Truly a Genoese, as grand a talker in distress as in triumph! Going to defend Acre from the Moor all by himself. *Bravo bravissimo!"* He laughed again, but the laugh had a snarl in it. The dead Saracen dripped down the back of Vittorio's neck, and he started, stared up, and thrust the body out of the way as casually as he would have swung his heavy hammer on a stout chain. "Rub your face off before Messer Romolo sees you or he will think you are a Moor and have you thrown to the sharks."

Messer Duardo balanced himself with difficulty against the swaying loom of his oar. "You may scoff, Venetian," he said not without dignity, "but I am so grateful for being set free I will overlook—"

"Free! Set free!" echoed Vittorio. "Call me a saint, will you? Why, you fool of a Genoese! Since when has Venice set free a Genoese caught in a Saracen galley? The block for you, if you can be sold!"

"But—"

"Oh, fry in hell, where you belong! You damned Genoese have made more trouble in the Levant than we Venetians can stomach. Set you free? The captain would look at you and all the rest just to see what sort of gallowsbirds we have captured. You'll all go to the slave-market in Rhodes," he added, passing on to unshackle the next benchfull. "Lay aft there on the upper deck. Mind your tongue if you don't want a Venetian pike through your gizzard!"

PAINFULLY Messer Duardo pulled himself together. He could not believe what he had just heard, yet his common sense told him it was true. Venice bore no more love for Genoa than Genoa had for Pisa. It was true, as the armorsmith had declared, that Genoa had deliberately broken into Venetian markets and zones of influence throughout the Levant in the effort to secure a share of the rich trade and colonial enterprises the First Crusade had made so profitable. He looked at his hands. Tough as they had been from handling sword and crossbow, the terrific work at the oar had blistered and torn the skin from fingers and palms till it hung in shreds, and he could not touch anything without the fires of hell burning from finger-tip to elbow. Would he ever be able to handle a sword again, or would these cruelly tortured hands wither into hard, racked claws fit for nothing useful? He moved, and the deep whip-cuts and weals covering his back drew and stung as he crept staggeringly among the dead and badly wounded on his way aft.

The slaughter had been terrific. Inured as he was to fighting, Messer Duardo felt his empty belly quiver with nausea. When he had finally picked his way up into the open and stood among the huddled prisoners in the waist, he saw nothing reassuring. Stolidly a handful of Venetian pikemen with weapons ready guarded Moor and Christian alike. Straggling up from below more and more of both religions joined the motley group in a deadly silence, nursing frightful wounds or whole-skinned, but spiritless.

Before the tent or awning sheltering the quarterdeck stood a Venetian noble in gleaming black armor. He was a huge brute of a man, his great square body carrying the weight of the heavy steel cuirass and thigh-pieces as easily as a doublet, and swaying gracefully to the roll of the dismasted galley. Piercing black eyes looked out above the black mat of whiskers that seemed to gush from his ears and nostrils; the sort of eyes that see once and remember always. Messer Duardo had heard of him at Acre, Captain Romolo Dandolo, a man so strong he could boast of having killed two Moors by strangling them both, Hercules-fashion, one with either hand. A fanatic patriot, a religious zealot, a phenomenally skillful sailor and fighter, he was magnificent in truth. Now his face was dark with anger and disappointment.

"Are these all the Christians?" he growled in a bass rumble in keeping with his squat figure.

"Yes, please Your Magnificence," answered a grizzled admiral, Messer Romolo's executive officer. "We found only about fifty, all Genoese."

Messer Romolo glared at them in disgust. "Genoese! They would be Genoese. *Sammarco!* I would rather have taken Pisans than these dogs. Ho, you! Is there any man amongst you who can read Arabic?"

No one dared answer. Beside Duardo and two or three others, none could read at all. The Venetian scowled understandingly.

"I will give his freedom to the man who can read me the dispatches we took from this pagan dog here." He kicked the body of the Emir savagely. "You Genoese deal with Tunis so much you ought to read Arabic. What! No one?" His disappointment curdled into rage that expressed itself in such a blistering of Genoa and all her sons that Messer Duardo's battered spirits rose from sheer admiration. The Magnificent one began with the sin of Eve and included every generation and its shortcomings from the Garden of Eden to the moment at hand in a rolling, lurid, soul-satisfying torrent of invective and description that devils might envy but never excel. He was not even out of breath when he finished. For a moment Messer Duardo vaguely considered trying to trick him by pretending to read the dispatches—abandoned it as too risky. He had no fancy for the eighteen inches of cold Venetian dagger he was sure to get through his bowels if he roused the suspicions of his captor. "Come! Speak up!" roared the Magnificent. "I keep my word. Who reads me these—" he shook a roll of parchment at the captives—"goes free. You with the Cross there," he strode up to Duardo and spread the parchment before him, "read me this."

"Nay, Magnificent. Latin I can read, and make some shift with the ciphers of the Greeks, but this I cannot."

Messer Romolo stared at him, rolled up the parchment and strode away aft again muttering. It mattered little, after all. He could have it read in the fleet when he rejoined it. Now his task was to clear away this mess, rig a jury-mast on the prize and work his limping vessels to Rhodes. Most of the Genoese could be safely turned to and replace the Venetians who had been killed in the fight. He gave his orders with a crisp clearness that set every man to his task with understanding.

Wounded though many of them were, the Genoese were pricked into brisk obedience by Venetian pikes—all but Messer Duardo. Greatly daring, he made his way straight to Messer Romolo and extended his torn and bloodied palms. The commander stared at him, too much astonished at such insubordination for speech.

"Magnificent Signor Capitano, I have fought in the Holy Wars already, and I know you from the first battles before Acre, though you do not know soldiers as well as you do sailors. I am Messer Duardo Lomellini of Genoa, and I had a company of two hundred of the finest crossbowmen in Liguria when we were captured by Scornigiani the Pisan pirate and sold to the Moor. I have been at the oar—I, a leader of fighting men! I cannot work because I cannot touch anything with these hands. But I can pay a good ransom. My name is good at the bank of Messer Federigo Santorini at Genoa. I—"

"Liar! To work with you before I crack your neck apart and throw you to the crabs! Your 'name is good at the

bank'! Scratched hands, have you? Poor fellow, it cuts me to the heart to see you so." His voice rose to a snarl, and he struck Messer Duardo a slap across the cheek that sent him reeling into the scuppers. "Tell that pretty story to the slave-trader when we get to Rhodes! Hai, Admiral! Set this prince of liars to work. Let him know what work means in the Navy of Venice. If he gets tired, throw him overboard to rest a while."

The executive seized Duardo and thrust him below. Out of sight of the captain, the kindlier subordinate whispered to him to keep out of sight and to do everything he could without using his hands too much. "Keep busier than the Pope at Easter," he warned impressively. "The Magnificent sees all. If you say a word of what I'm doing for you, I will show you things about whipping you never knew, you Genoese dog!"

CHAPTER III

SARACEN SCIMITARS

FORTUNATELY, it was only seven days to Rhodes, and once the harbor was reached, Messer Duardo felt considerably relieved. He even welcomed the coming of the hard-faced Venetian slavetrader who looked over the ill-assorted lot of prisoners with a calculating eye. Besides himself, two of the Genoese merchants were up for a second time, and Duardo let them do the chaffering first with the incredulous dealer. They got nowhere, for they had been robbed thoroughly, and being both small, mean looking fellows, their stories did not impress the trader. Messer Duardo felt it was time for him to interfere.

"Signor Merchant," he said with all the haughtiness he could put into his tone, "these two good fellows speak the truth. They are rich. They can indeed make you rich if you but listen and hold them until their ransoms arrive."

The trembling merchants shot him a stare of fear mingled with gratitude for such unexpected generosity. The Venetian eyed all three suspiciously, then laughed. "A pretty game," he observed, stroking his beard, "a very pretty game. You trick me into letting them ransom themselves, and you of course expect them to lend you money enough for your own ransom. All three of you go free, and I am left to become wise with three bits of parchment instead of three stout slaves worth twenty-five ducats apiece!"

"Merchants ransom *me?*" howled Messer Duardo. "May the Saracens tear my hands off entirely if such a thing can be! I am a soldier. I ransom myself, you thrice-damned Venetian cannibal!"

He was admirable in his effect. The slave-dealer scowled at him and considered. "Who are you?" he finally demanded. "Are you a noble?"

"Of the lesser nobility. I am a soldier and a crusader, captain of a great company, and a man of substance. I must be on my way to help in the succor of Acre. These two I have known in Genoa," he lied easily. "They can pay. When you have finished with them, I will deal with you."

Again the slave-dealer considered. At last he said, "Stand to one side, you three. When I have finished buying these swine here, I will think about you."

He walked down the lines of Moors and Christians, examining, testing, shrewdly estimating, and finally making a bulk offer to the admiral of Messer Dandolo's galley. It was greeted with derision and refusal, and the familiar vituperative bargaining followed, with a last resigned shrug as the dealer agreed to raise his price a trifle, and sent a trusted servant for his money-bags. Another marshalled the slaves in separate gangs and marched them across the market and out of sight to the corral where they would huddle in acute discomfort and filth until purchased. Back to the waiting three came the merchant, outwardly dejected, but gloating inwardly at having swindled the admiral out of several hundred ducats by making the lowest price on record for such sturdy slaves.

Sitting down upon a bollard at the edge of the wharf, the Venetian studied Messer Duardo and his companions. The merchants looked what they were, cringing traders with no souls outside their profits, and grudging even the price they must pay to escape a servitude more or less certain to end in slow and painful death. They were flabby fellows, unused to hard

work. One gruelling spell at the oars would certainly polish them off. Unless somebody bought them for house-servants —he grinned to think they would certainly be made eunuchs by any Moor rash enough to risk having them around—they would be useless except in a counting-room or bank. No Moor was likely to entrust any of his business affairs to gentry of their ilk unless he wanted to keep his books on the new rigmarole called double-entry which the Genoese had just invented. No, better let them ransom themselves if they could. He would get more in the end. But this blowhard soldier fellow was another matter. Here was clearly a fighting man, strong, hardy, already cut up by work at the oar, yet still full of fight. He should bring a first class price.

"Hark you," said the Venetian, coming out of his brown study. "I have only your words that you can pay."

"Fool!" snapped back Messer Duardo. "Do you think a Pisan would leave any Genoese prisoner more than his shirt? If we still had our purses with us, we would not be here talking to you now. Each of us will give you a writing to the bankers in Genoa. In six weeks you will have the money back. Meantime you can lodge us for very little."

"And have you desert in time to stop my payments!"

"Word of a Genoese noble!" Duardo replied, making the sign of the cross. "Remember I am a crusader."

The Venetian considered. "That might do if you were on a Crusade, but this is private. Anyway, these two are not crusaders."

"No," one of the pair replied, rousing sufficiently to assert himself, "it is true we are not fighting men or crusaders; but singly or together we are able to raise any ransom within reason. How much?"

"How much is your capital?"

The spunkier of the Genoese scowled. "Enough. But I have a wife, five children, a sick mother, and—"

"One hundred *gold* ducats from you, or Genoese gold *lire* to the same value."

"Mother of God!" cried the startled merchant. "Am I the Republic of Genoa, to pay such a ransom? I am not even the captain of a company, like my good friend here, the noble Messer Duardo."

"Can he not raise an hundred ducats?" the Venetian suddenly demanded of Duardo.

"How do I know? I am no merchant." He grew formidably surly. "Do you know the value I would put on your carcass if I had you in Genoa where you have us now?" He paused, but the astonished slave-dealer had no imagination. "I would offer you to any who would buy as poor dog-meat, for one-half of one ducat! As a slave you would bring nothing!"

"Why, you son of a million she-asses, I'll sell you to the mines for that! Digging salt will teach you manners even quicker than pulling an oar."

"And cheat yourself," snapped Messer Duardo. "I thought Venetians were smart. You talk like a fool. Have done," he added harshly. "Take eighty ducats for both these merchants. I will pay you fifty for myself. If you sell us, you get perhaps twenty-five apiece. Let us ransom ourselves, and you get almost double."

The Genoese who had not spoken opened his lips, but Messer Duardo cut him off with a sharp gesture. "Let be! This great businessman is considering whether he will let his lust of vengeance get the better of his lust for gold. Nobody but a fool would even think about it for a moment."

The Venetian stared hard at him. "I could cut your throat neatly, and nobody to say me nay."

"Go ahead, Venetian! Better to die quickly at the hands of a cowardly mud-worm than slowly at a Saracen oar. If you want to cheat yourself, do it. I cost you perhaps five or six ducats. Think how long it took you to make all that money; how much longer it will take you to make it again when you have finished me. If I had my sword, the devil would instantly have another imp!"

"I believe you," the Venetian said slowly after another pause. "I do not know you Genoese, but I know men fairly well. Nobody who was altogether a liar would dare to talk to me as you have talked. I will ransom you at fifty ducats. You are worth more, but you say truly that I could not sell you for so much. As for these two—hmmm. No, not eighty. If they are really good merchants in Genoa, I must have fifty each for them too. A

merchant should be worth even more in ransom than a soldier."

Both Genoese cried vehement protest. The Venetian waved to an attendant standing nearby. "Put these two fellows in with the other Christian slaves in the small pen," he commanded as the man ran up. "This gentleman comes with me."

"No, no, no!" shrieked the merchants.

"All my substance was in this venture for Syria," cried the younger. "I cannot raise fifty ducats so quickly."

"It is a fortune," wailed the other. "How shall I get it at all?"

"Give me your writings or go with the others. If this soldier who is only a captain of crossbowmen can raise fifty ducats, merchants can raise ten times as much. Take them away, Andrea."

Again the attendant laid hands on them roughly. The Venetian smiled as they groaningly agreed to pay. "And besides the ransom, you will pay me board and lodging until the money comes," he added. "That will be two *soldi* a week extra, so send for enough. Come." He led them off to the dingy waterfront ruin that served him as dwelling, office and slave-pens.

MESSER Duardo emerged from the laborious business of writing a draft on Signor Federigo Santorini completely exhausted. He had some ninety-odd ducats on deposit at interest, but whether or not the banker had invested them in some of the various loans of the Republic which would be hard to raise money on in a hurry he could not even guess. And this damned business of scrawling letters on parchment with a quill so much tinier than sword or dagger that it was no fit thing for a man's hand, was something for mumbling priests or for clerks who could not muster the courage to be men. Phew! Well, it was done. He was a beggar now, he supposed, but beggar or not, he was at least free on parole, as a gentleman must be in such circumstances. He could have the run of the town, while the luckless merchants had to consider themselves prisoners and keep within the bounds of the Venetian's crowded quarters. Fifty ducats was a fortune to pay for freedom that was likely to end abruptly in the first fight he got into; but after all, he was a Genoese and a soldier. And six weeks was not long to wait. His hands would heal up entirely long before that. Unceremoniously he demanded a loan big enough to let him buy some decent clothes such as befitted his station. His owner handed him a gold piece reluctantly. "You'll be wanting a sword next," he grumbled, noting the transaction carefully. "Don't forget that this loan bears interest."

"I'll get one," boasted Duardo, his spirits rising at the prospect of being decently clad again, "and you won't pay for it. Armor, too."

"Not in Rhodes, Genoese! If the Watch catches you with arms, you'll be fish-bait in five seconds. Nobody carries weapons here but Venetians and some Greeks."

Messer Duardo laughed derisively and strode off toward the mercers' shops. Free again! He was free and his own master. In no time at all he would be back at Acre and among his fellows; not, it is true, with the stout lads he had enlisted but a few weeks before at home, yet sound in body and itching for a chance at the Saracen to pay off new scores. Now all he wanted was to be rid of the vermin-infested rags he stood in and clean himself fitly, don fresh hose and doublet and look the man he was. He would make that single gold piece do the work of three. The sun was brilliant, Messer Duardo had a full belly of passable food for the first time in weeks, and in the cool distance fleecy clouds made a triumphal wreath about the cone of Cretan Mount Ida that seemed to him an augury of happiness. He sang a ribald couplet. For a merchant, that Venetian was an easy bit of game for a shrewd soldier! Imagine a Genoese being taken in by such a braggart piece of acting as he had displayed. He laughed in sheer high spirits and dove into a mercer's with a boisterous salutation.

Several hours later, steamed out in a luxurious bath, fed full once more and garbed in colors and textures that befitted his military pretensions, Messer Duardo reclined on the roof of his master's house regaling the trader with sanguinary stories of the siege and capture of Acre. A soothing ointment the Venetian's slave-keeper produced had taken much of the pain out of his mutilated hands and put his quarrelsome Genoese spirit to sleep for

the moment. The balmy summer night was clear and still, the black velvet overhead dusted with more jewels than the loot of Acre yielded. No soldier but could feel the stir of it when thinking of battle, and Messer Duardo's tongue was loose with wine.

Interrupting with a startled exclamation, the Venetian leaped to his feet and pointed northward to the mouth of the large harbor. Dimly in the starlight both men could see the ghostly shapes of huge winged things floating swiftly and silently in one after the other past the mole, ominously filling the harbor. There was no moon, but the shape of the silent visitors and the cut of their tremendous lateens told the story. Not a sound of any kind came from the advancing fleet. Not a rope-yarn creaked or a ripple slapped against the sharp prows. Not a single figure could be seen except for the indistinct blobs away aft which symbolized the control of each galley. On the roof Venetian and Genoese stared, counted and turned toward each other in consternation.

"Thirty!" exclaimed each man. "And more outside we cannot see," added Messer Duardo as a soldier's guess at the reserves such a raid must have to back it up in case of necessity. They looked back to the harbor anxiously.

Two by two through the narrow harbor-mouth stood the invaders in perfect columns. Once well inside, the leaders silently brailed up their great crescent-shaped lateens, and crept forward on the muffled legs of centipedes, their carefully handled sweeps. Deploying in a skillful maneuver opposite the principal landing-stage, and still totally unexpected by sentries who were everywhere either heavy with wine or peacefully asleep, the raiders moved up ten abreast and nosed softly against the wharf. A hoarse shout of command rang through the silent evening. Tremendous flares flamed into blazing brightness all along the defenseless waterfront, and a bellow of *"Allah! Allahu-akbar!"* answered the leader's shout as the pirates scrambled ashore by the hundred.

Messer Duardo turned grimly to the whimpering merchant beside him. "Do I

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Rhodes wakened fast to the onset of the howling Saracens.

get a sword now, you son of a goat? Have you got such a thing in this trader's den? I'm not going to be captured again!"

"No, no! We must not fight!" wailed the Venetian. "The garrison will do that. They will beat these fellows off. Let us hide. I have a secret place."

Messer Duardo spat. "The garrison will fight! Surely they will fight! They will wake up with scimitars through their bellies. How perfectly they have guarded the city! Greeks! Pah! No fleet could come within a league of Genoa without being instantly reported. We might let them enter the hornets' nest, but they would never get out alive. Greeks! *Gesu* save us!"

Rhodes wakened fast to the onset of the howling Saracens. A medley of screams and oaths, the clash of arms, the sound of splintering doors and the tread of rushing feet swept up to the roof. Unarmed, still sore from head to foot, hardly able to clamp his fingers about anything without acute pain, and unable in the emergency to hunt up any body armor, Messer Duardo considered swiftly what he had better do. The Venetian had fled precipitately, gibbering for his chattels and money. It was all very well, Duardo thought, as he watched the swirling streets below, to talk of not being captured again, but what could he do? Somebody threw a firebrand into the house opposite as he looked down, and a bright gush of flame, as a straw pallet inside blazed up, showed him a Moor black as Othello tearing the clothes from a comely young Christian woman who had scrambled almost into his arms from the window.

Messer Duardo tumbled halfway down the stairs in his rage and eagerness. Forgetting wounds and weariness, stiff muscles and lack of body protection, he burst out of the house roaring, fell headlong over a body at the very door, knocked a Saracen flat and found himself in a death grapple. He felt as they rolled about in the cobbled street as though a dozen snakes had twined about him, neck to heel. A sudden twist enabled the Moor to snatch a heavy dagger from his belt. Before he could use it, Duardo gave a mighty heave and seized a handful of the wiry beard digging into his sorest shoulder. With a tremendous wrench, he jerked his enemy's head back, and brought his one free knee up into the Moor's groin with a surge that settled him. Not a foot away lay a heavy longsword. The Genoese pounced upon it with a shout of exultation. Here was something he understood.

The fired house was a roaring furnace by this time, and the ravisher and his victim had disappeared. Messer Duardo, forgetting his lack of armor, dashed recklessly toward the melée raging along the main street and in the square. *"San Giorgio! Genova! San Giorgio!"* he bellowed, hewing his way into the rear of the advancing Saracens. Faintly across the tumult came an answering shout of *"Sammarco! Vinegia!"*

One! He slashed the head completely off a Moor just turning to spit him. Acre was no hotter than this. *"Sam Giorgio!"* Two—and a third! Something struck the back of his head. The lights and the shouting and the struggling figures vanished.

CHAPTER IV

THE WHITE MADONNA

MESSER DUARDO watched until the black leopard with the whip turned to swagger aft down the long runway between the oarsmen's benches. Then he twisted pain-racked lips to whisper to the slave next him at the sweep, "What ship is this?"

"Al-Borak—The Lightning," whispered back the Dalmatian, one eye on the boatswain's brutal figure. "Where were you captured?"

"Rhodes," groaned Messer Duardo, incautiously loud. "I remember the Saracens surprising the town, and getting into the fight. The next thing I remember is waking up in a slave-pen. Sweet Mother of Christ, but my hands, my hands!"

The black was upon him from a distance with a swish and vicious crack of the lash. Messer Duardo yelped as a piece flew bodily out of his already battered shoulder, and the blood spurted over his companion. The boatswain smiled at his marksmanship and the comparatively slight damage he had done. "Next time, you talkative Christian pig, I'll take an eye. I can pick one out at twenty feet. This is the great-galley *Lightning*. Slaves row in her; they don't talk."

Number Seventeen oar swung rhythmically backward and forward in a sullen, mutinous silence, but it lacked no force because of the hate seething in the slaves who worked it. Duardo the Genoese at the inboard end because of his size; next to him a husky Dalmatian; next to him a Slav of hair and features so drab he seemed more animal than man; and at the outboard end of the loom a wiry, bitter-faced Albanian, made up the four who rose and sat, rose and sat to the unceasing beat of the time-keeper's drum. Up and down the runway the vigilant black boatswain paced with his rawhide fangs ever ready to bite solid flesh out of any who faltered or talked or showed any sign of weakening. The galley skimmed over the mirrorlike sea at a tremendous pace that justified her fanciful title. Where she was, and what the southeasterly course meant, Messer Duardo could only guess, for he dared not speak again. The abominable throb in his shoulder was warning enough.

His spirits were so low he did not notice a brisk wind springing up, and the Emir in command rising from his cushions to scan the horizon and order sail made. A few moments later, when the heavy oars were shipped and lashed, and he and his fellows could sit and talk quietly as the *Lightning* careened to the wind and made even better time, he was too despondent to answer his companions except in monosyllables and grunts. For the third time he had been captured. Each time his fate was worse than before. Now he was truly lost. He had given the Venetian a writing for more than half his money, and no Moor, seeing his bulk and evident strength, would consider freeing him for any paltry sum such as he could promise. He must nurse his strength and live long enough to butcher that black fiend. Then overboard if he could before they got him. The voice of the Dalmatian broke in sympathetically.

"I understand," he observed, wagging a commiserating head. "You decide to kill Yusuf ibn-El Fahr, the boatswain. You will live for that. *Allah!* You are new to the oar. We all decide that at first. I have been at this sweep for two years. Now I do not think at all! Who are you? You are no Venetian or Greek."

"No," murmured Messer Duardo, sketching his story in cautious tones. "This time I am without hope. The Venetian dog has my money and the Moor has my body. Christ save my soul. This time I cannot help myself."

Unfeelingly the Dalmatian laughed. "You Genoese are all crazy. Lie to the man. Give him your writing for whatever he asks for a ransom. Something may happen before it comes back marked worthless and you are given a hundred of the Saracen cure for corns for pretending!"

"The bastinado?"

"Yes," was the bitter answer. "I had terrible corns. No more now. A slave with a bamboo stick kisses the soles of your feet with it. After about the thirtieth kiss it does not hurt any more, and you have no more corns—forever!" He turned up his bare feet, and Duardo shuddered as his horrified eyes took in the scarred, shapeless, gristly, inhuman things that might once have been feet. "The Emir Al-Faruk likes to watch this little kissing game. When it is over a slave rubs vinegar and salt in to bring you back to life. Then— Well," he shrugged expressively, "don't annoy him or you'll never lead your crossbowmen again."

Messer Duardo's despondency increased. He glanced up to see Yusuf laughing down at him with malevolent enjoyment of the object lesson and its effects. He vented a few choice Arabic obscenities, but though Duardo understood most of what he snarled, he merely bent his head. When the boatswain wandered off, the Dalmatian approved his wisdom.

"If you had said one word then," he declared, "Yusuf would have gone back about twenty feet and snicked a piece out of the muscle in your thigh, just to remind you that he is the master of this galley so far as slaves are concerned."

"I will make him less than a man before I kill him," gritted Duardo in a whisper the Dalmatian had to strain his ears to catch.

"*Bismillah*—God willing," he quoted the pious Moslem formula, and chuckled. "I should enjoy watching that. But I will not help you try, Genoese. If you fail—!"

Messer Duardo was not listening. His hands, idly fumbling with the steel belt about his waist and the light chain attaching it and himself to the oak bench, had discovered something. His spirits leaped up with a bound that dizzied him. It required all his soldierly self-discipline to keep from shouting his delight. He dared not even let his fellows at the same oar know that the hinge-pin holding the ends of the belt together was loose. When the time came he could work it out. Unless the black leopard accidentally discovered it and had the armorsmith hammer a new head on it, he was free at will. Bastinado or no bastinado, he would kill that black imp of hell who had struck him. He would— He settled his haggard features back into rigid blankness. The big *Lightning* swept on with the grace of a petrel. His chance might come when they reached port. He would kill one more Moor for Christ's sake even if they tore him to pieces for it. He felt his aching muscles refreshed. Even his bleeding shoulder did not throb quite so dreadfully.

FORTUNATELY for the slaves, the wind held. If they were bound for Alexandria, as he was sure they were from the course, they should make the run in about thirty hours, considering the tre-

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mendous pace the *Lightning* was making. Nothing he had ever sailed in was half so able and swift. He had small idea of her speed, but as he glanced overside and watched the bubbles hissing past, he wished he could capture so birdlike a vessel and take her back to Genoa to serve as a model. Genoa! Would he ever see those green and gray Ligurian hills again? He could kill, anyway. He shot a glance blistering with hatred at the whip-necklaced boatswain and settled back on his hard bench to rest. He must be at his doubtful best when the time came. He closed his eyes and favored his aching shoulder as best he might.

Eventually he slept. The heavy belt about his middle chafed and irritated him. It had been made for a man less barrel-like of girth, and when Messer Duardo turned to ease his cramped muscles, the ends bit him smartly. He woke shortly after dawn, stiff and surly. Cold had settled in his wounded shoulder, and the slightest movement was agonizing. But move he must, to loosen up the muscle before it was called into play again at the oar. Right ahead lay the African coast. He stood up to stretch gingerly, flexing one thew after another, at the same instant catching a momentary glimpse, as the *Lightning* rode an unusually high swell, of a distant city and harbor. A long roll of the signal drum roused the crew. Sailors rushed about on deck. Half an hour later the tall lateens went up in the brails, the oars were unstopped and the drumbeat timing began again, with the black leopard boatswain running up and down the long gangway amidships shouting and flicking at a venture to get the utmost out of the straining crews.

As they swept grandly through the narrow entrance to the port, the bitter-faced Greek at the outboard end of the oar jerked his head, and Messer Duardo without losing his rhythm managed to peer through the port. Lying at anchor, her yards sent down, her twin rudders unshipped, lay an Italian galley, the white ensign of Pisa flaring out stiffly from her lofty poop. Duardo lost his swing, and instantly the black caught him across the shoulders with a slash that bit deep. A moment later the sweeps held stiffly, and the *Lightning,* curtseying up gracefully beside the mooring-stage, stopped without a jar. The slaves fell back on their benches as the oars came in. The leopard now had other work to do. Duardo cautiously screwed around to locate that white banner.

A Pisan! He cursed the fate that brought a vessel of that nation into port instead of one of his own brethren. Still, she was Italian—Christian; no Christian, surely, would refuse refuge to a fellow Christian, especially a crusader. in time of emergency. She was a fair-sized trader from the looks of her, armed, of course, as were all merchant craft, but of only about forty oars. He marked the spot where she lay, a scant two hundred yards straight out from the Moorish landing-stage. He could find her in the blackest night. Again his heart leaped up—sank again. A Pisan! Those mercenary dogs would not help their own mothers unless they were paid for it. As bad as the self-important Venetians. And if he killed that black son of a camel before he slipped overboard, there would be such a terrific uproar they probably would not take him if he offered them gold. He would have to let his kill go for the moment. With the chance to escape himself, what did it matter if he let that black devil live a little while longer? He could not offer the Pisans either good pepper, silk or gold, but he could give the captain a writing for more money than he had left, a lot more. Once back on Italian soil again, he could make some sort of compromise with his rescuer. The important thing was to get back. He glanced at the mangled feet the Dalmatian had carelessly thrust out before him as he sprawled on the bench and decided against anything but sliding into the water that same night. He could swim the short distance to the Pisan before anyone knew he had gone, if he was quiet enough. After that—well, if had to die a lot of Pisans and Moors would show him the road! For the first time in weeks, Messer Duardo was content.

With escape or at least a fighting death in sight he found the waiting, the pretending to sleep, salt in a fresh wound. His mates at Oar Seventeen wanted to talk, to compare experiences, to learn all about him. He was going to get them into trouble, perhaps get them flogged to the

raw with that frightful knotted whip when the black leopard found out he had vanished. He could not talk without betraying himself; and he dared not give even the Dalmation the slightest inkling of what he meant to do. So he affected surliness because of his aching shoulder, and feigned sleep when every nerve was tinglingly awake and alert.

The rowers' bench and the deck beneath it were frightfully hard. He did not have to simulate misery to groan and turn over, twist and swear from time to time as he pretended to sleep and wake, all the time using both eyes and his head. He must not go overside at his own oar lest he rouse his mates and they involuntarily betray him. Five oars down someone had left a jacob's-ladder trailing over the rail. He watched it feverishly all day, dangling loosely. How far down did it reach? Could he manage to crawl over the sleeping men at that oar and sneak down without arousing anyone? A nervous chill shook him. He opened his eyes to find the black leopard glaring down at him ominously.

"A fine slave!" grated the boatswain. "Shivering after two days at the oar!"

"Nay, Master," Duardo responded, suddenly tactful beyond his wont. "I am sore, yes. But the shiver was for fear of your mighty arm. My shoulder knows how it can strike—like the lightning itself!"

"By Allah!" gurgled the boatswain, pleased with the tribute to his infernal prowess from a sturdy Christian. "For that I will have the armorsmith give you three more links for your chain tomorrow. You look a powerful fellow."

"May the mercy of Allah never cease to bless you!" exclaimed Messer Duardo, pursuing his advantage.

The boatswain was thoughtful, then he grinned. "Behave yourself, row well, and perhaps if we ever need money you can ransom yourself."

THAT night out of one almost closed sleepless eye Messer Duardo watched every movement throughout the snoring galley. He saw the Emir go ashore with some other high officers and stride away up the sloping street leading to the citadel. He saw the slaves one after another drop asleep on their benches or under them, heard their chains clank as they turned and twisted, felt the loose pin in his own belt give as he fumbled with it. The dangling rope-ladder was still in place. Security in that slumbrous harbor lulled everyone. The black leopard had long since gone ashore. Nothing stirred save the lonely sentinel he could dimly perceive on the ramparts of the castle at one end of the landing-stage.

With nervously sensitive fingers he worked the pin out of his belt. The iron cramp about his waist fell apart, and he barely caught it before it clanked to the deck. Barefoot he crept, silent as the shadows among which he snaked his way to the ladder. Not a slave stirred. The watch aft idled dreamily against the side of the sterncastle, his crossbow unwound and not even close to his hand. With his heart thumping riotously, Messer Duardo whispered a prayer to the blessed San Giorgio of Genoa to guard him, and slipped over the side. The ladder thumped a little against the oaken planks as he clumsily crept down. He stopped and hung there in the darkness, too much shaken to take another rung. A ripple lapped against the side with a soft gurgle. He put his foot down, feeling for the next rung. Nothing there; the ladder was short. He peered anxiously down over his shoulder. Four or five feet below him the dirty harbor water moved sluggishly with the sheen of oil. He tensed his arm muscles and dropped carefully down until his feet touched the cool black wet. With another prayer he let go.

Fifteen minutes later he was clinging, exhausted and panting, to the forefoot of the Pisan. Apparently he had not been missed yet. But he could not stay there; he must get aboard. He could see lights and hear voices. With a spasmodic heave he managed to get himself out of the water and scrambled up. As he half leaped, half tumbled over the fore rail, a startled Pisan leaped back with an exclamation of alarm and whipped out his dagger.

Messer Duardo managed an imitation of laughter that ill suited his wild appearance and dripping hair. "Nay, friend—neither sea-devil nor ghost, but Italian like yourself. Take me to your Magnificent Captain."

"Holy Saint Bartholomew!" exclaimed

the incredulous Pisan. "Are you armed?"

"Not yet! Had I arms I would have made a eunuch of that black spawn of hell who tortured me these two days past!"

"Step into the light here where I can see you. You sound like a damned Genoese!"

Messer Duardo moved into the feeble square of light shining to seaward from a partly opened door in the forecastle. The Pisan remained invisible, and called softly to Balduccio, Anastasio and Ranulfo to come look at what the sea had spat up into their laps. In an intstant a ring of wicked-looking pikes hedged Duardo in closely. He frowned at them. "You are wise to be careful," he sneered. "I could have led a hundred men aboard before you awoke."

"Genoese!" The Pisans simultaneously recognized the proverbial tactlessness of their bitterest enemy.

"Genoese—and a soldier of the Crusades," retorted Messer Duardo with such haughtiness as he could muster, tossing back his dripping hair. "Take me to your captain at once." Nobody moved or spoke. "Fools! You know what will happen to you in spite of your merchants' truce with the Infidel if I am missed from yonder great-galley, and found on board here. Quick! They may be looking for me now. Do you want the bastinado, and a hard bench at the oar?"

"What in hell's name is all this noise?" demanded a harsh voice from the shadows aft. "Do you want the guardship down on us for disturbing the Moors' peace at night?"

Messer Duardo whirled and faced the man who emerged into the light, his hand upon his sword. He was a lean blond of wiry build and a face whose vivid blue eyes seemed strangely out of place in the sea-tanned leather of features hawklike in their ascetic severity. He was not very tall or very impressive as to bulk, but he had a queer, fiery-cold menace to him that bespoke command and more than average intelligence.

Tersely Messer Duardo told his story.

"Magnifico Signor Capitano," he concluded, feeling that his plea was falling on deaf ears, and that the Pisan was planning to turn him over to the guardship, "I plead with you in the name of the Holy White Madonna you of Pisa adore and we Genoese venerate. You would like to kill me because I am a Genoese. I would rather fight you than ask anything of you. But after all, we are both Christians. I am a captain of crossbowmen, a crusader. They will beat me to death by inches if you send me back, or make me fight against other Christians. If you hide me and take me back safely, I can give you a writing that will bring you good Genoese gold from the banker. I am your prisoner until the writing is paid."

"Hide you, and have you found, and lose my ship!" snarled the Pisan. "You know these Saracens—what they would do to me. Back you go!"

Messer Duardo glanced quickly toward the landing-stage. Nothing moved. No lights flitted about. He had not yet been missed. Desperately he tried his trump card. "You forget pigs," he said quietly.

"Pigs? What have pigs to do with you?"

"You have a pig on board?"

"Two pigs. We shall eat them on the way home. We sail tomorrow as soon as we get clearance from the harbor authorities."

"Butcher a pig now, and when the Infidels come to search your ship to see if I am here, cover me with his pork."

MESSER DUARDO could see nothing funny in it, but Pisan sailors and even the worried captain first stared, then went into muffled paroxysms of mirth. Nobody in the world loved the Genoese; everybody fought them by land and sea. They carried a chip on each shoulder wherever they went, daring the world to interfere with their pleasure or profit. And here stood one, an escaped slave, a crusader, a captain of crossbowmen and evidently a stout fighter from his looks and build, begging Pisans to cover him with hog-meat! Buried alive under a pig! What a riotous story that would make to tell all over Italy and wherever Pisan vessels traded! Messer Duardo and the dead pig would be linked in song before a month had gone by.

"For that will I hide you, Messer Genoese, if you have money enough to

bring me a good ransom," the Pisan captain finally said, throwing a nervous glance at the Saracenic cruiser dreaming at the wharf. "How much money have you?"

"Enough," Messer Duardo retorted. He had at last seen through the Pisans' amusement, and it was all his fiery temper could do to refrain from going berserk. "Take me into your sterncastle, and we can talk. I will give you a writing, and your *scriba* can witness it."

"Too fast, Genoese, too fast," objected the captain. "We all share the responsibility—and the torture!—if you are found here. My men have a share in this. It must be enough to give every man on board encouragement to get you back to Pisa in safety."

A growling assent from the ring of sailors approved his stand. Messer Duardo took the chance he had been considering for three days, that his draft had not been sent to Genoa before the Saracens attacked Rhodes. If it had not, he could still promise a fairish ransom. His hackles rose as he heard sounds from the landing-stage, and he decided to risk everything. Once safe on Italian soil something could surely be arranged. Anyway, no Italian would sail back to Alexandria to return him to the Infidel.

"I said enough. I meant enough. Dead, I am worthless carrion. Alive in Italy—even in your Pisa—I am worth to you—" he hesitated, seemed to the eager listeners to calculate—"forty gold *lire genovesi.*"

"Sacred wounds of Christ! Fifty *soldi* apiece for my men and about five *lire* for me! You call that a ransom? Into the water with him!"

Messer Duardo held a protesting hand toward the sailors who jumped at him, and threw his last atom of spiritual vitality into a sneer.

"'Too fast, too fast!' See what a good bargainer your great captain is," he scoffed to the crew. "If he is as hasty as this in trading with the Moor you will be lucky to get anything out of your hardships this voyage."

The captain was afraid to speak loud enough to make himself heard above the uneasy grumble of the sailors. Messer Duardo checked them all.

"You run no risk at all for me. If the Moors come aboard to inspect before you sail, or even if they think I may be here and come looking for me, they will never meddle with pork. Take me home, and you get gold, clear profit above your company account."

"But forty *lire* is fantastic!" sputtered the captain. "If you are worth anything you are worth twice that."

"Did you ever earn forty golden *lire* with your sword, you damned trader? I earned whatever I have with my sword, when the stones and darts were so thick we could not see the sun, and the Greek fire blazed all about us. Worth! Of course I am worth twice forty *lire,* worth ten times forty *lire!* But I cannot pay so much. Do you want me to give you a writing for more than I have in the banker's care?" he snarled, with a fine show of honesty that carried conviction despite its trickery. "My last word is fifty-five *lire genovesi.* If you won't take that, you may all seek your father in hell like the mercenary Pisan dogs that you are!"

A low babble of argument and protest

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eddied about the scornful figure that stood with folded arms and dignity in spite of the cold water dripping from his hair and mustaches. The men were evenly divided for tossing him back into the water and for taking him home. An occasional gurgle of laughter at the thought of the butchered pig took the edge from a discussion that grew fierce at moments. Messer Duardo watched and listened with an increasing fear sending rivulets of nervousness up his cold backbone. They were getting nowhere. If the decision was not reached before he was missed it would be too late. Everybody would pay the Saracens' price of confiscation and slavery. His anxiety made his harsh voice more than ordinarily brusque.

"Signori Pisani, unless you decide this thing quickly your ship will be taken, your goods confiscated and you will all be at the oar in a few hours. Kill your pig quietly. Knock him in the head, and then cut him up. If we are caught unready— You know what the kissing of the feet means. Do you ever want to walk again?"

The captain shot a glance shoreward and swore zestfully. "Dog of a lying Genoese, I ought to throw you overboard and shout for the harbor watch!"

"Why don't you, Pisan?" sneered Messer Duardo. "Come! Let us fight it out among ourselves after we escape. This is fantastic. Stun your pig and get to work below. Be careful, not too many lights. I will give you the writing."

The command in his voice was so sure that instinctively a sailor caught up an axe. Messer Duardo led the captain, fuming and swearing by the bones of the Apostles, into the tiny after-house. The writing witnessed and sanded and hidden most carefully between timbers in the sterncastle, Messer Duardo emerged on deck, partly dry, fairly comfortable in mind, and precisely grateful enough. The captain had done a good stroke of business if it came off at all, and felt fairly sure that the fifty-five golden *lire* sworn to on the draft represented about the last *soldo* Messer Duardo could possibly raise.

Both men went below, where the sailors were busy in the shambles of the tween-decks with the carcass of the porker. A sharp, clear blast from a distant trumpet startled them all. For a second no one spoke. Messer Duardo grinned into the suddenly fearful faces.

"How the hornets buzz!"

Shouts and cries, crisp orders and confused noises floated across the harbor as the Pisans worked desperately to get their unwelcome guest covered up before any searchers came aboard.

"Give me a dagger," Messer Duardo demanded as he lay down in the huge wicker basket-like meat-receptacle on the foredeck. "I will not be taken prisoner again and suffer the bastinado. Ah! A boat . . ."

CHAPTER V

SOLDIER OF THE CRUSADES

THE first ray of dawn was streaking the waters eerily as the Saracen guardboat hailed roughly and came alongside. Little knots of sailors were busy at making fresh chafing-gear and splices, others at various other tasks preliminary to sending up the yards and getting ready for sea. Most noticeable of all, the butcher and his assistants were neatly stowing parts of a freshly slaughtered pig in the wicker meat-kid forward.

Gruffly the hard-faced young Saracen in command told of a slave's escape. Without bothering to ask if the Pisans had seen him, he ordered his men to search the ship. By twos they swept through her from stem to stern. The Pisan captain stood by silently indignant but helpless. The Moor caught sight of the wicker receptacle and strode toward it. "Swine's unclean meat for unclean swine of Christians!" he snarled. *"Allah!"* as he gazed down on the raw flesh from which little gouts of blood were still oozing. He held his flaring nostrils together and whipped a long, double-edged dagger from his belt. "We will see if there is anything under it." He lunged until the haft of his weapon smacked against the unresisting pork. Again and again he thrust. Not a sound came from the basket. He turned away in disgust. The men returned from below empty-handed, themselves disgusted by bloody mess some of the Pisans were dallying with in the forward tweendecks. A glance sufficed. The slave was certainly

not on this galley. More than likely he had drowned in trying to swim to safety. "Back with you," he barked at his crew; and to the Pisan: "Get to sea! You pollute our sacred air."

"I dare not without clearance, Magnificent One," pleaded the Pisan, shaken by mingled eagerness and fright.

"Filthy dog! Butcher of pigs! Send up your yards. Ship rudder. Heave short. I take the responsibility. This pig smell is all over the city already."

"I hear and obey, Magnificent One, murmured the Pisan captain, too much delighted to make his voice entirely humble. "I hope you will not hold it against us that we had to have food for the voy—"

The Moor turned with one foot on the ladder. "If you throw those pig's guts into the harbor, I'll have you all bastinadoed!"

He was over the side in a flash, his boat skimming away shoreward. Almost as quickly eager hands strengthened by fright had the cable in and the heavy wooden anchor catted, while the oarsmen swayed rhythmically to their task, the sails filled, and gradually gathering way, the *Santissima Vergine* glided with sluggish motions out past the guardian fort on the mole and on into the open sea. Not until well into the afternoon, with not a sail in sight, and the African coast lost in the southern haze, did anyone breathe freely. The captain searched the horizon carefully, crossed himself twice and laughed for the first time in many hours.

"Time for the resurrection! Dig out the Genoese pig—if the Pisan pig has not smothered him!"

Shouting and joking, the men sprang to obey. Laying the meat aside, they stripped off the weighty pigskin roughly, and a frightful caricature of humanity sat up and glared at them. Messer Duardo was not pretty, but the Pisans enjoyed his appearance. The heat had melted the lard that clung to the thick skin, and it warted him in gouts and gobbets, ran down his purpled cheeks in shiny rivulets, stuck in his up-ended hair, and encased him from head to foot in a slippery coat that streaked and mottled him grotesquely.

"Holy San Giorgio!" he exploded when he finally got a lungful of good untainted salt air. "And you laugh!" he roared. The Pisans laughed harder than ever. Messer Duardo grasped the edges of his wicker cage and tried to clamber out. But he was a greased pig, and he slipped back, calling upon all the saints to let him have but one chance at his tormentors. With the galley rolling jerkily because of the bad stowing of her heavy cargo, each time he stepped on the slippery, tacky mess of mingled lard and grease and blood, his foot shot from under him as he raised the other to thrust it over the side of the basket. The Pisans rolled on the deck. Most helpless of all was the captain, whose laughter turned into violent hiccups, which infuriated him and added to the uproar on deck.

Forgotten was all the risk they had run. Even the money they would make from this amazing rescue was as nothing compared with the relish of such a Gargantuan joke. Messer Duardo stopped his futile struggling. With a particularly choice sea-blessing, he tore off the ragged fragment that served him for trousers, turned it inside out, and managed to get a foothold. The next instant he was out on deck, glaring, naked and glistening in the sunshine.

Gaily two of the sailors set to work with soft soap and sand to clean him. It was a mighty task, and as the lye in the soap bit deep into his unhealed wounds, he bawled in agonies that being sloshed with cold salt water did not lessen much for some minutes. So tense and anxious had everybody been when he came aboard that wounds had not been thought of. Now the whole crew gathered about him in pity and sympathy, crossing themselves and muttering at the savagery that would inflict such abuse on any human being. As they worked, now carefully and kindly, Messer Duardo displayed a long gash in his right side.

"When that black brother of the devil stabbed into the meat I let out all my breath and made myself very small, but he touched me the first time. Just a hair more to one side and his knife would have struck bone. Then—" He shrugged eloquently; the men crossed themselves.

Some hours later, clothed and made as comfortable as might be, with a soothing ointment drawing the inflammation from his wounds, his shoulder and both hands bandaged crudely but effectively, and his belly comforted by the Christian meat and

wine for which he had hungered so long in slave-pen and galley, Messer Duardo had regained a good deal of his Genoese robustiousness. By the time the *Santissima Vergine* reached Porto Pisano and was signalled to go on up the Arno to the mooring-rings along the levee inside the city, he was as unpopular as he had been when first he stood on the foredeck of the vessel and demanded to be taken home.

"REMEMBER," grumbled the captain after the authorities had cleared the galley and given permission to unload and discharge the crew, "I do not entirely trust you, because you are a tricky Genoese. You have given me a writing on your banker, it is true; and the Magnificent *Podestà* of Pisa has granted permission that you may wait here until your ransom is paid. But we Pisans have no cause to love you Genoese. If you have any sense you will not go about the city talking as you have talked on my ship. I do not want you killed after all the trouble I have had to get you back to Italy, so behave yourself. You will consider yourself my prisoner until your banker sends me the gold. Come back every night to sleep in my house. You cannot escape. The watch at every gate will be looking for you."

"Parole of a soldier!" snapped Messer Duardo haughtily. "I do not trust you but I have to."

"Ungrateful dog!"

"Thief of a trader! Do I have to go about this city of cut-throats without even a dagger?"

"By the most blessed Madonna you certainly do!" shouted the captain. "Give you a weapon and let you wander around Pisa looking for a chance to bury it in some noble and unsuspecting citizen? You are lucky that I don't have you locked up in the Gualandi Tower for safe-keeping!"

Messer Duardo spread both hands in a scornful gesture and strode away. Perhaps it was just as well after all not to show his contempt and hatred too plainly. His hands had healed up nicely, far quicker than he had dared hope, and though his shoulder was still very stiff from the hole the whip had dug in the upper muscle, and his slashed rib was still sore, he was in excellent condition. The soil of Italy caressed his feet and assuaged the bitterness of his soul. His only worry now was whether Messer Federigo Santorini had cashed his draft for the Venetian and so would be unable to meet this fresh demand for funds.

Mayhap the Venetian had died in the Saracen raid on Rhodes and the draft had perished with him. Anyway, there was no sense in worrying his head about it yet. The captain had said a ship would be leaving for Genoa in three days. Until it returned, Messer Duardo felt like taking life as cheerily as God meant it to be taken. He cocked his cap at a rakish angle and smiled his best at a pretty young Pisan standing in a doorway.

The girl smiled back at him coquettishly, but he was not thinking in terms of dalliance for the moment. With his mind fixed upon weapons and a mail shirt, he strode on. For the captain to have refused him weapons was a perfectly natural precaution. For the same man to try to take them away from him once he had them was entirely different. This captain might be a blond Tuscan and a stout lad, but in fighting he must realize that he was a mere soft amateur compared with a veteran crusader. Pursing his lips into a gay whistle that made no sound, Messer Duardo wandered briskly on until he found what he was seeking.

"Hmmm," he mused, glancing into the little black shop from whose somber interior came the glow of a forge and the clang of hammers. "This will serve." He strode importantly in and looked about. An old smith, rubbing his grimy hands on his leather smock, stepped forward.

"What does your Magnificence wish from me?" he said, bowing low.

"A blade fit to split Saracen heads with, a sound casque lined with good leather, and a shirt of the best mail. Oh, yes, and a crusader's dagger, long and heavy."

The armorsmith regarded him closely. This time he did not bow. "You must be the Genoese the galley *Santissima Vergine* brought in today. They say you were a crusader before the Infidel captured you. Will you take the Holy Cross again so soon?"

An idea burst dazzlingly in Messer Duardo's head. "If God wills it," he said

with seeming indifference. "Is Pisa sending out an expedition?"

"Is Pisa. . . ?" The armorer bowed contritely. "Magnificence will pardon my dull wits. I forgot you are but returned to Italy this very day. If you will go to service in the new Cathedral yonder—" he jerked his head toward the distant jumble of building and scaffolding where the Duomo was beginning to assume imposing proportions around the crypt and lady chapel—"you will hear not alone the Holy Mass but such preaching of the Crusade as man never put ear to before. Ahhh! If I were but a young man again!"

Messer Duardo laughed at his enthusiasm. "I have been through it all in many a hot fight. It is true that I am come but today from the galleys of the Infidel. While I wait in Pisa for my ransom to come from Genoa, I must get me the arms of a gentleman."

"Magnificence will forgive me, but swords and mail and stout headpieces do not come for nothing to whoever whistles after them."

"Lout! I am a crusader!"

"Oh, aye, as to that," retorted the smith comfortably, "we all lie when it suits our purses or our needs. A crusader is after all only a man."

Messer Duardo concealed his fury and caught up a splendid two-edged sword lying on a chest beside him. It was a cunningly fashioned blade of sweet balance, and a weight that exactly suited him. Stepping back a pace to clear the old smith, he shadow-fenced with it, sprung the blade fiercely, brandished it and laid it aside. "This is nothing very special," he observed critically, "but it will serve until I can get my own armorer in Genoa to replace my 'Tongue of Flame' that the— Well, I will take it anyway," he finished lamely, glad he had caught his impulsive tongue before it admitted that a Pisan pirate had taken his favorite weapon.

"That blade," the smith said slowly, "is not for you. Forty years of experience have salted it. It is so keen, so true, it will rive a man from crown to belly for hands that use it well, or with another stroke snip lightly through fustian or silk from Cathay."

"A marvel of a blade, truly," scoffed Messer Duardo, amused. "You will tell me next it was forged to honor his Magnificence the *Podestà.*"

The smith shook his grey head slowly. "Nay, sir stranger; for one greater than the *Podestà.* This sword was commanded of me by no one less than the Magnificent Messer Capitano Luigi Scornigiani, the valiant corsair."

"Scornigiani!" cried Messer Duardo, his florid face suddenly purple. "Scornigiani!"

"Aye, Luigi Scornigiani. With this he will hew the heads from many stout enemies of Pisa. Ah, Sir Genoese! There is a man for you! He—"

"Now as God is my life," bellowed Messer Duardo furiously, "this fellow Scornigiani makes a stink in my nostrils!" The blood pounded in his temples, and his eyes burned red and strained. "Blood of the martyrs, but I will have that sword; and if that spawn of the sewers of hell and I ever meet, I will flesh it in him until not even the crabs of his ocean will be able to find all the pieces!"

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THE smith chuckled at such rage and hopefulness. He could easily forge a new blade before Scornigiani returned from his present cruise to spoil Genoese merchantmen trading to the Levant. But business was business, and this fire-breathing Genoese was, after all, a Genoese. Yet Scornigiani had been overbearing and contemptuous to him, and he was willing to chaffer.

The trade required an hour before each man was exhausted. Then Messer Duardo proved his nobility by writing with cramped and clumsy fingers a document calling upon Messer Federigo Santorini to pay certain moneys in golden Genoese *lire* to the excellent armorsmith. Witnesses were called in and the agreement wetted down with a bottle of stout Pisan *nero*.

In high humor, Messer Duardo put on the shirt of mail, a little long in the body, for Scornigiani topped him by a good three inches, but just the right size in the chest, slipped the baldric over his shoulder, sheathed his new dagger, slung his sword rakishly and clapped on the headpiece.

He was well content. He knew he had paid triple the price demanded as a rule for such accouterments. But he was not safe without them, and if that Venetian had really perished at Rhodes as he piously hoped and was beginning to persuade himself, his draft on Messer Santorini would not have been presented, and he was safe in adding this fresh obligation. Anyway, it would be a full ten days before anyone would know, and in the meantime life was very satisfactory and his belly was very full.

" 'God wills it!' " he quoted to himself righteously, fitting the cry of the crusaders to his newly acquired arms. He was very proud of them. That mail was soft as Greek or Venetian brocaded silk, yet it could turn a dart, so close was its mesh; and his sword—his fingers tingled to use it.

He would have to find a name for it. "Tongue of Flame" had been indeed a goodly weapon, but if he knew anything of quality, this was yet better. Well, he would wait and christen it from some incident of its first use. His fingers played around the hilt with the affection of a worthy craftsman for his tools. Meantime he would stroll down to this new Pisan Cathedral he had heard so much bragging about as the monument to the great Pisan naval victory over the Moor at Palermo. It would be time for vespers, and if they were really preaching the Crusade again— He hummed his favorite folksong as he idled along the street with eyes very wide open.

Pisa was still mostly a wooden city, with here and there a palace whose lower story was built of costly stone. As Messer Duardo ambled slowly away from the banks of the river where most of the *palazzi* were and threaded his way cautiously through the dark, narrow, winding side streets, the waterfront odors of pitch and fish and seaweed gave place to the reek of the crowded city. That in turn vanished as he emerged at last into the great green open square at one side of which Messer Bonanno was raising his tremendous experiment in architecture for the glory of the White Madonna.

Messer Duardo leaned against a house-wall and studied it. He saw a towering, all but shapeless choir and one bay of a nave, all of it so encumbered with scaffolding it was hard for anyone not a master-builder to be sure exactly what it was. So this was the building they said marked something or other new in art, and was drawing master-builders from all over Europe to marvel at it. Hmph! Just like all other cathedrals—big as a castle. Too fancy to amount to much in case of attack; and those tremendous slit-windows—why, any capable cross-bowman or good balista marksman would pour a hail through there that would kill off— He stopped with a snort and crossed himself devoutly. He had forgotten. This was a church, not a fortalice. Slowly he started across the green toward what seemed the entrance. He had not been to confession for ages, but that was certainly not his fault. He went in.

Evening service was in full swing. Messer Duardo uncovered reverently, touched his fingers to the holy water and made his way soberly forward. Yes, there were other men in the sacred place who carried arms. He felt reassured, and as a faint whiff of incense drifted to his nos-

trils, he hitched the great sword around between his knees and dropped down on the end of a bench. The gleam of the candles and the glitter of ornaments on the sacred images; the soft, oriental perfume of the smoke eddying upward in blue spirals from the silver censers in the hands of the little red devils—so he thought of the impish acolytes—before the high altar; the scarlet and purple, black and fine linen of the ecclesiastical dignitaries, all moved him deeply, and his pagan soul responded freely to the solemn Gregorian chant. It was good to be here, by God! Those damned Infidels had nothing to comfort a man's soul like this. He fell into a reverie, far from religious but wholly placid.

A sudden stir in the choir roused him. With great dignity a mitred Archbishop was moving forward and ascending the tribune. The brilliance of his stole and the towering gold and white mitre crowning him, made the old man a splendid figure. And when from between his white-bearded lips rolled out a thrilling diapason bass, Messer Duardo almost cried from sheer emotion. Here was a man, truly a man, with a voice like the thunder of a city being stormed. He began to listen. What such a voice had to say must be worth hearing.

The Archbishop was an orator. His first words rang through the vast shell of the Cathedral-to-be with the ferocity and authority of a passion that nothing could restrain. " 'God wills it!' " he cried, flinging wide his arms. The audience sat gripped by the sheer power of the man. His voice rose and fell, stormed and pleaded, argued and persuaded with every wile and artifice known to the speaker trained to affect his listeners to the uttermost. Under his spell the congregation wept and moaned, exclaimed aloud and swayed in its seats.

Messer Duardo, hardened sinner that he was, gave himself up completely to the luxury of this emotional orgy.

" 'God wills it!' " thundered the prelate again, rising to fiery climax. "He wills that we destroy this defiler of our most sacred places. He wills that we exterminate him root and branch from the Holy Land, from the seas where he preys upon our noble commerce, from the cities where his pagan presence is an outrage of Christianity. Who will take the Cross? Who will avenge the insults this blasphemer has put upon our beloved sweet Christ? Who here is man enough to prove himself in the Holy Wars?"

He was not allowed to finish. A score of young stalwarts leaped up and pressed to the foot of the tribune, shouting for the Cross.

Messer Duardo suddenly felt his heart turn with the old fire, the old lust of battle, the familiar smells of blood and burning. There would be joyous looting for years to come for stout hearts and bold hands. His savings gone, here was his chance to win a competence all over again. The idea the innocent query of the old armorsmith had given him flowered suddenly. With a bound, Messer Duardo stood before all the rest, holding his sword aloft in the crusaders' manner, hilt upward as a symbol of the Cross.

"I take the Cross for the third time!" he bellowed. "I was at Acre. I was first on the walls. I have just escaped the galleys of the Moor. I take the Cross!"

Messer Duardo dropped devoutly upon his knees.

HALF an hour later he came out of the Duomo, the Cross blazing upon his mail, and lying, as only a seasoned campaigner can lie, of his conquests. The newly sworn crusaders eyed him respectfully, examined his scars with awe, shook their heads over his blood-curdling tales of Saracen galleys and tortures, and hinted darkly at what they would do in their turns. One suggested that they crack a bottle over their new comradeship. Nothing loath, Messer Duardo drank and spat and lied lustily with them until the moon shone through the bottles and the mountains of dead Saracens all about the place tainted the air of even the sodden drinking-booth.

Well pleased, Messer Duardo stumbled his way home, singing with more boisterousness than music. He was not entirely comfortable in mind over his escapade as he finally, after getting lost three or four times, came to the captain's rather forbidding looking house not far from the Arsenal.

The captain was waiting for him in anything but a pleasant frame of mind. Half a square away he had heard him approaching.

Messer Duardo grinned foolishly and thumped himself a resounding blow on the chest as he stood before his grim and silent host.

The captain looked harder—leaped up in a fury.

"Drunken liar of a Genoese! Fool! Cheat! You have taken the Cross! Who gave you that sword?"

"Peace, little man! Peace!" Messer Duardo slid the thirsty blade half out of its scabbard. "I am no liar, neither a cheat. Nobody gave me my sword. I bought it for a writing on my banker. So did I also buy this stout mail that will turn many a Saracen arrow and scimitar—"

"No cheat! No cheat!" screamed the captain. "The writing you gave me is hardly dry, and you take the Cross!"

"What of that?" Messer Duardo replied. "I worshipped in the Duomo. Some Archbishop preached the Crusade. I have always been a crusader. I took the Cross, surely. Just my example—two score stout fellows came forward for the avenging of the insults to our sweet Christ. 'God wills it,' Messer Capitano."

"No, by San Vitale! You shall not go! I will not be cheated of your ransom!"

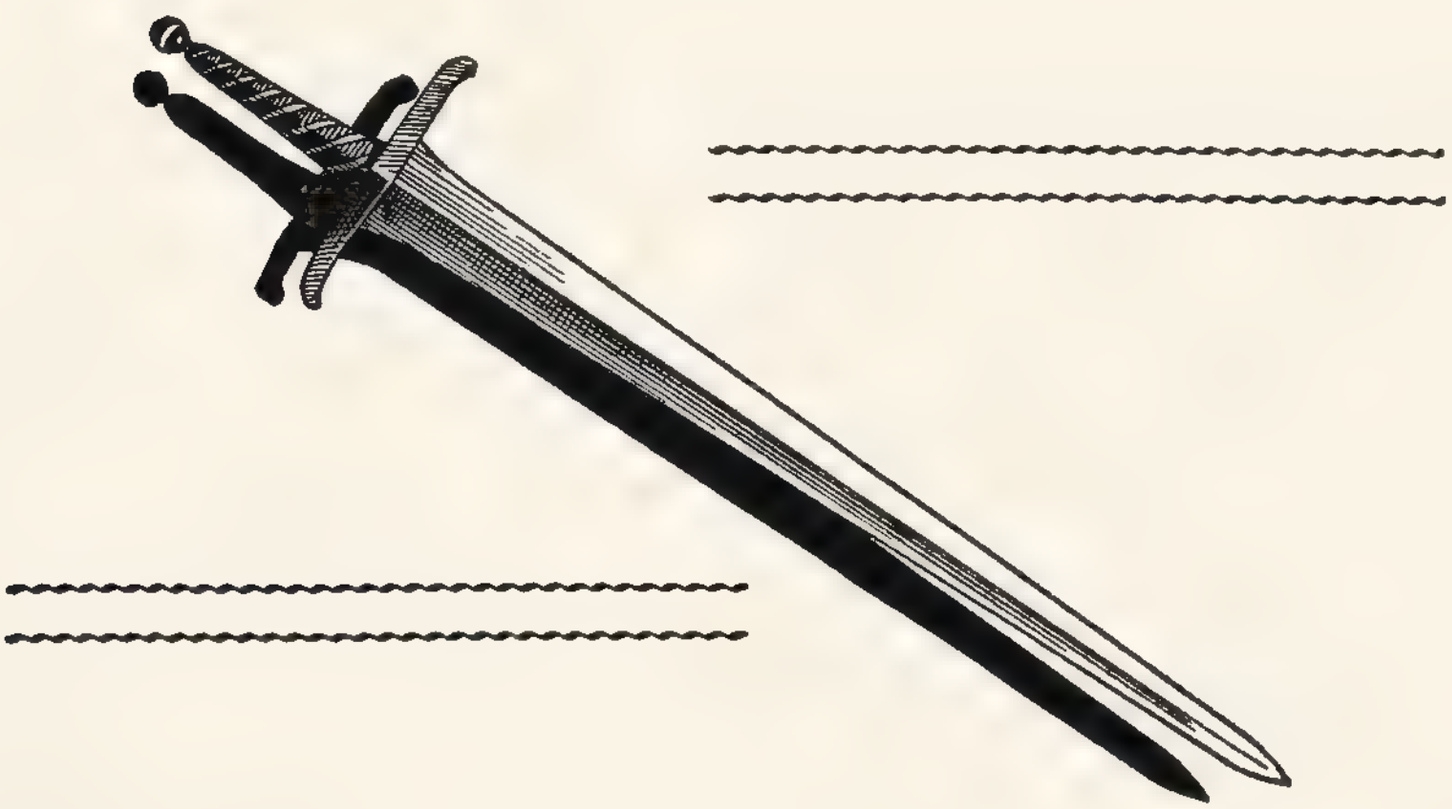
Messer Duardo waggled a dirty finger at his host. "Nobody is cheating you. You have my writing."

"I'll go to the Archbishop! I'll prevent your sailing until your money comes safely from Genoa!"

"Don't be a fool. I have sworn. The Cross is on my mail. The writing is good; the banker is good." He came fully into the light, and smote the captain on the shoulder with heavy jocularity. "I wouldn't cheat the man that saved me for anything! You just wait a few days for your money, that's all. We start in three or four days. And come back—*rich!* I'll give you a share when I get back. Going to bed now."

He passed into the house. After him stared the captain, his face black with bitterness and frustration. It was true. He could do nothing to hold back one who had sworn before the Church to war on the Infidel. He had been cheated, tricked. He should have known a Genoese was without honor.

"Blessed Mary Virgin, Mother of God," he muttered, scowling after the feet that clumped solidly up the stairs, "if ever I help a lying, deceiving Genoese again may I never more put to sea, but drown in a mud puddle!"



POPULAR FILMS

A Guide to Good Movie-Going For Fiction Fans

Ted Palmer Picks:

For A Western: "The Streets of Laredo" with Macdonald Carey, William Holden, William Bendix, Mona Freeman (Paramount). Technicolor.

When three badmen split up and two get into the Texas Rangers by mistake, there's trouble afoot, pard. William Holden and William Bendix are the hombres who turn good and refuse to tip off their former partner, Macdonald Carey on big jobs. This leads to complications when Holden refuses to bring in Carey—a source of irritation to the Rangers. Bendix, however, goes after him and gets shot (dead) for his efforts. Holden, stirred to action, calls for a showdown.

* * *

For Adventure: "Down to the Sea In Ships" with Richard Widmark, Lionel Barrymore, Dean Stockwell (20th Century-Fox).

Although they finally lower the boom on Bering Joy (Lionel Barrymore), the old whaling master, he still has time to indoctrinate his young grandson (Dean Stockwell) into the ways of the sea and whaling. Before the old man dies, however, he tussles with his first mate (Richard Widmark), an 1887 ninety-day wonder, with an ill-fated ing attempt, storms and icebergs.

* * *

For Sports: "Interference" with Victor Mature, Lucille Ball, Lizabeth Scott, Sonny Tufts (RKO).

A high-salaried professional football player, Pete Wilson (Victor Mature) has mingled woes with an expensive wife (Lizabeth Scott) and an unsuspected heart condition. Turning down an offer to coach at his old alma mater, he decides to play in the big game—despite his heart—to win back his wife. A team mate (Sonny Tufts) and the coach's secretary (Lucille Ball) wise him up. *Training camp pictures, practice sessions and scenes from actual progames give the picture added interest.*

For Mystery: "Homicide" with Robert Douglas, Helen Westcott, Robert Alda (Warner Brothers).

A transient worker, looking for a job, finds murder and murderers on a citrus ranch in California. After being threatened, he testifies that the ranch owner's death was accidental. His isn't, a few hours later, and Lieutenant Landers (Robert Douglas) has a hunch and some clues that lead him to an out-of-town hotel. Questioning the bartender (Robert Alda) the hat-check girl (Helen Westcott), he gets a lead and returns to the citrus ranch where he finds a piece of telephone cable wound up on the plow of the tractor. This is the tipoff on an illegal racing wire service scheme. *The sleuthing is better than average.*

* * *

For Drama: "Knock On Any Door" with Humphrey Bogart and John Derek (Columbia).

Ex-Skid Row lawyer, Andrew Morton (Humphrey Bogart), unintentionally causes Nick Romano (John Derek) to become one of the more undesirable citizens on the wrong side of the tracks. Although marriage temporarily halts Nick's career of gambling and small-time thieving, he returns to his bad ways when he can't make the grade on an honest job. He is picked up for a cop-killing and Morton agrees to defend him, but with a not guilty verdict almost won, Nick breaks down when the prosecutor insinuates that Nick's wife committed suicide because of his crimes. Nick goes to the chair, but forces are already at work to clean up Skid Row. Nick's death has at least served one purpose. *A bit grim, but extremely powerful picture.*

* * *

For Intrigue: "The Bribe" with Robert Taylor, Ava Gardner, Charles Laughton, Vincent Price, John Hodiak (MGM).

Government agent Rigby (Robert Taylor), on an island off the coast of Central America, is in search of a gang which falsely condemns surplus airplane motors, reassembles and sells them at exorbitant prices in South America. In cracking the case, Rigby tangles with beautiful cabaret singer (Ava Gardner), her drunken husband (John Hodiak and several assorted villains. Payoff comes when Rigby orders a raid on the plant which he has discovered, and shoots it out with the leader of the gang (Vincent Price).

GRANDMA WAS A LADY

By JOHN PRESCOTT

THE summer air ceased shaking and the broad river no longer echoed the strident wailing of the engine. The beautifully vicious race boat—Stanford Marine's new Gold Cupper—glided into the pier, and a smile cracked Jock Stanford's crusty face.

"Well, now, Georgie," he said to me. "Ain't that something?" He ran his hand through the shock of white hair and pulled at his red nose. He said it again, nodding his head slowly and smiling. "I think I'll call her *Typhoon*. She's a world-beater."

I didn't say anything to that. I was down on my hands and knees on the rough planking of the pier waiting to fend off the bow as it swung in, and keeping an eye on Chugger Brown in the cockpit of the boat. Chugger shifted his bulk and his dark face frowned disapproval. Beneath the engine hatch I could hear the big Allison hissing and spitting.

"Well?" Jock asked. The affability was gone from his voice and he seemed browned off that Chugger wasn't leaping about in glee.

Chugger was deliberate in removing the derby and mopping at his hairline with a crimson handkerchief.

"She's all right," he said laconically. He pushed the handkerchief into the pocket of the coveralls and looked up at Jock.

"She's all right," he said again. "For sprints anyway. I don't know if she'd last a Gold Cup heat or not; let alone three of them."

He wrestled out of the life-jacket and carefully replaced the derby as he stepped up to the pier, where he paused, towering over Jock. The breeze was around behind him and I could smell the alcohol and castor oil in his clothes.

"I think we ought to let this thing grow up," he said to Jock. "She's hotter'n the door-knob on hell's main gate, but I don't know that I'd trust her very far. These new jobs ought to have a few months in engineering."

Jock's cheeks puffed up with air and his faded blue eyes bulged a little.

"What in hell do you think I got this thing for?" he asked. "Every guy in the circuit's got one of these now. If I stick her in the shop, then where in hell will we be?" He prodded Chugger's thick arm. "I bought *Typhoon* to win races with. The country's flooding with three-point suspension boats and I aim to be right out in

front with the rest of them. And starting this week-end at Chicago."

Chugger didn't seem to be listening. He was looking out over Jock's head; up along the broad pier, beyond the welter of cruisers and runabouts in the basin, to the wide sprawl of the Stanford Marine Yard buildings. I followed his gaze, sensing where it was going. Up through the warehouse walls, to the big, timbered rack where old *Nell* lay cradled in the dust.

"We still got *Nell*," he said. He looked down at Jock again, speaking more rapidly. "She's got a lot of speed left in her, Jock. That lap record of hers—seventy-one—lasted a good while." He glanced down at the boat in the water. "She can last easily through the season, and then by next year we'll have this new one all ironed out."

"*Nell* can't hold a candle to these new jobs and you know it," Jock snapped. "She was O.K. at one time, but so far as we're concerned she's seen her day. Right now, she's just a nice old lady."

Chugger sniffed. He looked down at the rakish lines of the new and shining *Typhoon*, the flaring sponsons and the white gleam of the enameled deck planking. He sniffed again.

"*Nell's* got dignity," he said with a faint air of disdain. "And she's got character. This thing now. . ."

Jock reached up casually and lifted the derby from Chugger's head. He held it in his hands, turning it over and over and inspecting it carefully. At length he held it by the brim and let it bob and vibrate in the air. Chugger's eyes never left it.

"This damn hat," Jock said, arranging his words carefully, "typifies your very existence. You're dated. You're resistant to change and progress. You and this damn hat and that old mahogany has-been up in the warehouse. You're all alike, and if I let you, you'd do nothing but loaf her around every race course in the country."

He thrust the derby into Chugger's greasy fingers.

"This is a new era, Chugger Brown. *Nell* was damn good in her day; the best in the country, and you made her that way." His eyes took me in on that one, because I was head mechanic around the Stanford Yard. "And I expect you to do the same with *Typhoon*," he concluded. "This week."

THAT was all from Jock. He walked away, stiff and prideful on his old, bandy legs. Some of the guys from the shop who'd stood back, grinning and eating it up, closed in and I told them to fuel up *Typhoon* again and to pump out her bilge.

"And check her water pump," Chugger said sourly. "She's running too hot." He adjusted the derby again and I took his arm, feeling a little sorry for him and thinking that maybe Jock had been unfair; especially on that off-hand disposal of *Nell*, who, after all, was closer to Chugger than a blood relative.

And that in itself made me incline a little to Jock's thinking. *Nell* was a good boat, a fine boat, twenty feet of thundering mahogany; but she was old, fifteen years, and times were changing. The trend was going toward shorter lengths and broader beams, with sponsons for lift and suspension—and great big power plants with single- and two-stage blowers.

They were new, these boats, still in a half-way experimental stage, and this was the first season they'd be out in force. There was that much to say for Chugger's doubts, their newness and unproven ability; but at the same time I couldn't help but feel that he had somehow gotten his personal feelings mixed up in the matter.

We crossed the street and walked into a small, nautical bar called the *Annex*. The bartender drew two beers and we took them over to a side booth. Chugger put his flat thumb on the rim of the glass to hold the foam down, and when it settled, took a drink and wiped his mouth with the back of his hand. A grease spot smeared just under his nose.

"Well," I said. "What do you think? What do you *honestly* think?"

Chugger shrugged and toyed with the glass.

"She's a winner," he said. "But like I said. For a short haul. But she ain't dependable. She—well, she ain't like old *Nell*."

Old *Nell*. There it was again, and now I was sure. He was all wrapped up in a private prejudice.

"This new thing," Chugger went on, "is like a sleazy dame that's all ginned up. You never know what in hell she's going

to do next. You ought to have time to find out." He took another pull at the beer glass.

"I don't think she can stand the gaff for a long race. That Chicago race will be three thirty-mile heats. Jock ought to know better than to buy a new boat one week and try to race it the next. I don't think she can make it."

But old *Nell* could, he would be thinking. Old *Nell* could, and when it was all over she would come staggering over the line way in the rear of everything else on the race course. I began to lose patience with him, the way Jock had back on the pier.

"You don't even know," I said. "You've only driven her for a couple of five-mile heats. Come on, swill that thing down and let's go back to the pier. *Typhoon's* gassed by now, and you can take her around for thirty. And then we'll see what's what."

He shrugged again and upended the glass, tilting his head back to drain the last of it. His old derby was back on his head and there was a little patch of his black hair plastered on the sweat of his forehead. When he put the glass down he moved the derby forward and we got up and walked back across the street to the pier.

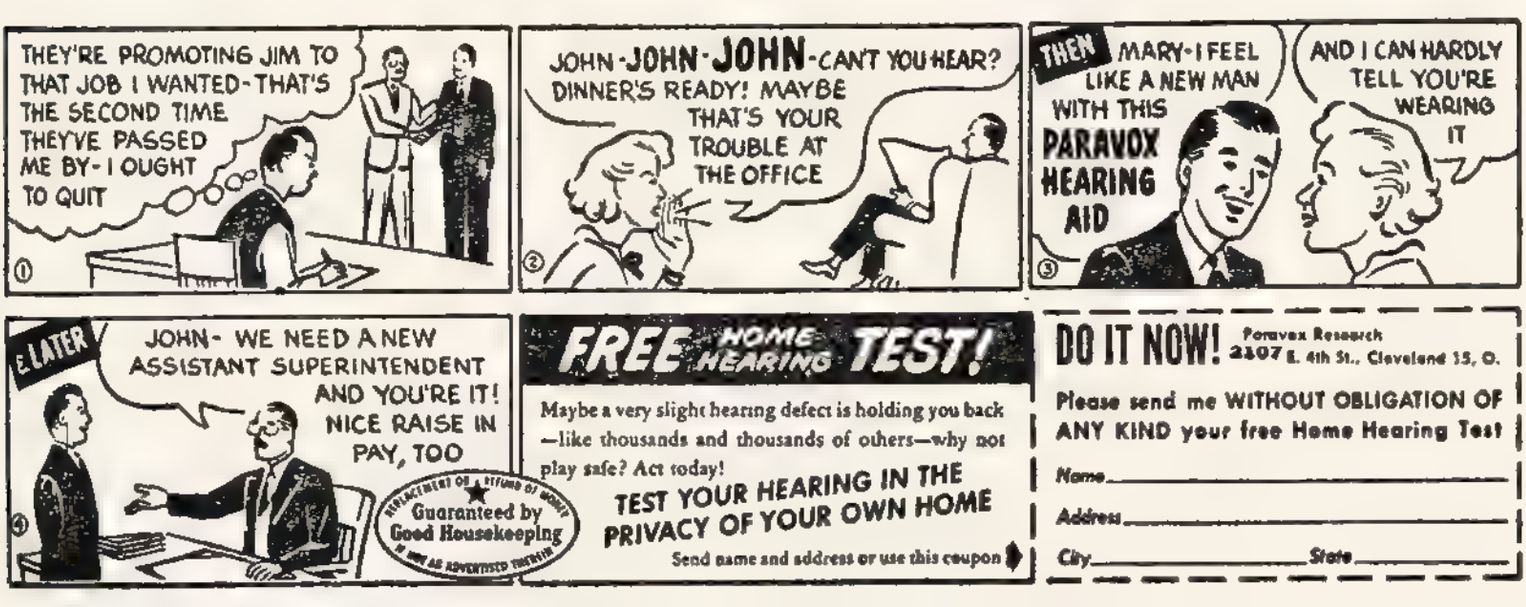
He didn't say anything when he dropped down into the cockpit and shuffled around settling himself and getting the life-jacket on. I kind of wished he'd wear a crash hat, but he never had, not even in *Nell,* and I knew he wouldn't pay *Typhoon* a tribute by starting with her. Among other things, he believed in his own indestructibility.

He sat in there quietly for awhile, turning the gas on, setting his throttle and adjusting the blower, and I looked out over the water, which was ruffled with the light breeze and blue and shining with the sun and the clear sky. The course was plainly marked, a five-mile rectangle set off on either end with big, orange buoys. The stretches were long, nearly two and a half miles on a side.

After a couple of minutes Chugger nodded and I dropped down on my hands and knees on the pier to fend him off. I put my hands on the white deck and when the Allison boomed I could feel the trembling all the way up my arms and down my back and legs until it grounded into the pier.

Chugger nodded again and I shoved him away, and I could see him engaging and easing the throttle up. The water behind the transom, which had been only faintly roiled and agitated, suddenly sucked down and then exploded aft in a white torrent as the screw turned over. *Typhoon* went away with a roar, throwing her white bow high to the sky and slowly bringing it down again as she gathered speed. And the white torrent became a wide swath of foam on the river, with a high flinging ridge of spray rising out of the center of it like a rooster tail.

He took her straight out at slightly beyond half throttle and angled off to the right onto the course, down toward the down-river turn. He swept it in easily, taking it wide and giving her a short blast on the far side to broadside her around to the far straightaway. On the stretch she picked up speed and after a minute or so I heard the scream of the blower, the


THEY'RE PROMOTING JIM TO THAT JOB I WANTED - THAT'S THE SECOND TIME THEY'VE PASSED ME BY - I OUGHT TO QUIT
JOHN - JOHN - JOHN - CAN'T YOU HEAR? DINNER'S READY! MAYBE THAT'S YOUR TROUBLE AT THE OFFICE
THEN MARY - I FEEL LIKE A NEW MAN WITH THIS PARAVOX HEARING AID
AND I CAN HARDLY TELL YOU'RE WEARING IT
LATER JOHN - WE NEED A NEW ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT AND YOU'RE IT! NICE RAISE IN PAY, TOO
Guaranteed by Good Housekeeping
FREE HOME HEARING TEST!
Maybe a very slight hearing defect is holding you back—like thousands and thousands of others—why not play safe? Act today!
TEST YOUR HEARING IN THE PRIVACY OF YOUR OWN HOME
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Please send me WITHOUT OBLIGATION OF ANY KIND your free Home Hearing Test
Name
Address
City State

high, wailing *woo-o-o-o-o,* rising above the flat blast of the engine.

Chugger went into the turn fast, and the white and shining water flashed up high behind him as the sponsons tripped in the slide. She came out fast, going like blazes, wide open and flat out, just skittering over the water and the big Allison screaming like hell's own calliope. She came down toward the pier in a wild frenzy, small and obscure for a few short seconds, because it was at least a mile from where she blew out of the turn; and then big and gleaming in the sun and spray, like the swift cut of a saber or a flash of lightning across the black sky.

She was frightening in her speed, and mean and maybe treacherous; somehow remote and with a malevolent purpose to her existence. She was not friendly and amiable like *Nell*—and for a second I thought I could feel what Chugger did. No character. And then he hammered by, shattering the air and vibrating the pier way up in the high nineties. He went by the end and I put the clock on him.

I WATCHED him go full out on those six laps, those thirty miles, running wild like a mad thing on the stretches and geysering the high sheets of sun-drenched spray and water on the turns. And Chugger rode her hard, taking all she would give, sitting high up and bulging in the cockpit, with the derby looking like a black button against the white of the deck and the background of the spray.

And after a while he wasn't riding *Typhoon,* but by some trick of the eye it was *Nell* out there instead. She was loping along in those stretched out power-packed strides, her smooth mahogany hull shining white, then golden, then brown as the polished planking caught the brilliance of the sun and the sparkling reflection of the water.

And somehow too, I could see Chugger in the cockpit, laughing and talking to her and having the time of his life as she howled over the low chop and threw up the water in the broadsides; and ran the long stretches almost full out of water, with only her screw and transom making contact. But my mind came back and *Nell* returned to the dust of her timbered rack, and it was *Typhoon* out there, raising her high *woo-o-o-o-o* to the south wind, and Chugger was in the cockpit, driving hell out of her, but not enjoying it at all.

He ran the full six, crossing the pier in a white sheen of spray on the last, and took an extra at retarded throttle to bring the engine down out of the clouds. *Typhoon* came in to the pier, hissing and sputtering and casting heat tremors up from her engine hatch. I caught her bow and swung her around so Chugger could get out, and when he was up on the pier again, stretching his back and rubbing his legs I showed him the watch.

"*Nell* never came near this," I said. "She was a good six miles per hour short of it in her prime." He stood up, running his hands over his kidneys. "What'd it figure out to?" he asked.

"A little over seventy-seven for an average."

Chugger nodded disinterestedly and stooped down over the cockpit of the boat. He took my arm and pointed at the row of temperature gauges.

"Look at that," he said. "They're higher'n hell."

I looked at them. They were high, higher than they ought to be; almost up to the red.

"The water pump?" I guessed. It was my business to know about those things, and given another few weeks I would have. But she was so new I had nothing to go on except what we learned from her in performance checks.

Chugger made a vague motion with one hand and tipped the derby back with the other.

"I don't think so," he said. "It's just the whole damn business." He said it again with emphasis. "She's got bugs that got to be worked out. And that takes time. Only thing I can think of right now is to take that blower off."

"You do, and your head comes with it." It was Jock. How he'd crept out there without us knowing was beyond me. But he was there and he'd heard Chugger and he looked as sore as I'd ever seen him. His blue eyes didn't seem faded but looked more like they were all iced up, and his white hair seemed all bristly like a dog gets at the back of the neck.

Chugger looked at him for a silent moment, then moved his big hands up and rested them on his hips.

"She'll never last three heats, Jock," he said. "She'll unravel sure as hell. And I ain't just speaking about the engine; I'm thinking of the whole damn thing. She shakes and shimmies and sunfishes like a bronco. Take off the supercharger and she might make it. She won't burn up then, maybe."

Chugger reiterated that sleazy dame theory, which he kind of liked, and then launched off on another tack. Jock stopped him. His voice was all tight and wheezy, more so than I'd ever heard before.

"So she's all ginned up like a young dame," he said. "And I suppose you want to stick the blower on Nell. Is that what you want?"

Chugger protested. "No. I never said. . . ."

Jock cut him off again. His blue eyes were all iced over now, and there was no stopping him.

"Well, if you think *Typhoon's* all ginned up with it, you might as well give your favorite living grandmother a quart of rotgut whiskey as to stick the blower on *Nell.* You'd get the same results. She wouldn't last five laps."

Chugger's big hands fluttered appealingly, but Jock ignored him and turned to me.

"We're going to Chicago Saturday, Georgie. And we're going to win." He scowled at both of us, and his white eyebrows came together over his nose like a wide chalk mark. "Understand?"

He stalked away again and Chugger stood there just shaking his head sort of helplessly.

"I never said nothing about that at all," he told me. His voice became querulous. "What in hell's the matter with him, anyway? He never behaved like that before."

I didn't know, but I was beginning to get an idea, a thought. It was a bad thing, the kind you don't like to see a good guy like Jock get into, but I knew with his temper and impulsive nature he'd be a set-up for it.

"I'll be right back," I said to Chugger. "Want to take her out again?"

Chugger shook his head. "No, I guess not. If he's so damn set on Chicago, we better spend some time on her insides." He flipped an arm at the guy on the derrick, and as I turned to walk up to the main building I heard the snorting of the donkey-engine as it lowered the slings to the water.

I do not know if Jock had been chewing his finger nails or not, but when I walked into his nicely paneled office he was slouched behind his broad desk and he looked guilty. I put my hands on the cool glass top and leaned across toward him.

"Check Lamont," I said.

He looked at me silently, and then down to his calloused hands.

"Yeah," he answered. "Check Lamont."

"How much?"

"Fifteen grand on whatever we put up against him. Payoff at Chicago."

"When did all this happen?"

"When I was out on the West Coast dickering for *Typhoon.* About a month ago. He got one just like her, built by the same people; only he's had her about six months and I didn't know that."

"So he maneuvered you into a bet, knowing that you very likely wouldn't have the time to get *Typhoon* in top form by the time the Chicago race came up."

Jock nodded ruefully. "Yeah," he said. "That's just about how it happened."

I sat down heavily in a deep leather chair. Check Lamont. Check Lamont was the kind of a guy who would go to an Irishman's wake for the express purpose of taking pennies from the dead man's eyes. He was that bad, and more, he was something of a boozer. There was nothing but meanness in him.

He'd been racing the boats for a long time, nearly as long as Jock Stanford, but he was never a credit to the sport and always looked at it as a source of some kind of personal gain. And he'd never missed a chance to take a swing at Jock.

"That's a stiff jolt," I said. "Supposin' he comes through."

I didn't see how he could miss if things were the way they seemed, but I didn't want to say it right out.

"I'm pretty well over-extended," Jock said more or less to himself. "We've done a lot of building around here this year; and then too, I bought *Typhoon.*"

"It's that bad, huh?"

Jock nodded and looked up at me. "Don't tell Chugger about it," he said. "I was pretty hard on him out there and he'll have enough on his mind without knowing that he's got a good deal of Stanford Marine Company riding on his nose besides."

"I won't," I said. I figured that if Chugger found out he'd probably fill that derby of his with rocks and sink it right down to the bottom of the river.

DURING those few days that remained before we left for the Chicago race we did what we could to make *Typhoon* what she ought to be. There's an awful lot in 1710 cubic inches of Allison engine, and I used up all my experience and a lot of guess-work to boot. Chugger helped a lot, but his attitude evolved from a foregone conclusion. He was not enthusiastic, and every once in a while he'd sneak off to the warehouse and sigh at Nell's bier.

He improved somewhat when we got to Chicago and lowered *Typhoon* into the Burnham Park lagoon. There was a lot of the old gang there that we hadn't seen since the previous season and Chugger smiled and told Jock and me that if it was only the year before and he was driving *Nell,* there'd be no questions at all.

But it wasn't the year before, and when Jock and I exchanged glances I knew he thought the questions were too big and too numerous to consider.

It was half an hour or so to the first heat and Chugger was out on the five-mile course razzing *Typhoon* up and down the lakefront with the other boats, when I saw Check Lamont coming along the pits toward us. I hadn't seen him in a year, but he hadn't changed. He was tall, like Chugger, but not as bulky. He had a smooth, boyish face and fair hair; and he was always smiling. There's something about that kind of meanness, that smiling, pleasant meanness that makes my skin crawl. You never know quite where you stand.

"Well, now," he said to Jock, taking me in with his smile. "Your boat looks pretty good." Chugger was giving it what-for along the front stretch, booming along in front of us toward the committee barge and the big, white-faced starting clock.

"Surprised?" Jock asked distantly. He didn't look at Lamont, but kept following Chugger around the course with his eyes.

"No, not entirely," Lamont said easily. "I knew you'd have a fling at it. I'm just wondering how long she'll last. Three heats, thirty miles apiece, is a long haul. And the lagoon isn't as smooth as it might be. Of course, you've got a break; only two heats today. Last one in the morning."

Jock didn't seem to be listening, or if he was he gave no sign of it. But I was, and everything he said hit me right in the middle. It *was* a long haul, and if it got rough it would be like a car going across a plowed field at a hundred miles an hour. That stuff was bad enough on boats of *Nell's* vintage, although she'd been a damn good rough water boat, and my doubts on *Typhoon,* which was lighter and strung to a high C, got bigger and bigger.

Jock turned around with a slow movement and hiked his wallet out of a rear pocket. He pulled out a check and gave it to me.

"Georgie's honest," he said to Check. Check's smile didn't change as he passed me his own check.

"He better be," he said quietly, looking at me.

"Now, get the hell out of here," Jock said. "You stink up my pit." He was facing the water again, and he just breathed it out, as though he didn't trust himself to raise his voice.

Check sidled away with a light but menacing laugh and a little while later Chugger came in and we filled the tanks again. He was shaking his head and looking from me to Jock.

"If the wind stays in the west," he said, "we might have a chance. But if it kicks around and comes in off the lake this lagoon'll be rougher than *Typhoon* can take. She's running hot enough now, but the wear and tear of heavy going might burn her up."

Jock's face was tight and there were little white puckers around his lips. He didn't say anything and neither did I. I just nodded to let Chugger know I understood. Above the other noise around there, then, I heard the flat slam of the five-

minute gun, and shortly after, Chugger took *Typhoon* out onto the course.

THAT first heat was a wild thing, but I don't think I expected it to be any different. There were eight boats, all Gold Cuppers, but only three were the new ones, Gurney, Chugger and Check; and they came down on the starting line like a thousand thunderstorms, wailing and screaming and roaring and churning one whole side of the lagoon into a milky froth.

After they passed the clock and went down toward the south buoy I couldn't see anything through the blaze of spray until they began to slide around the tall, orange-painted pylons and hammer out onto the backstretch. And even then it was hard to pick the leaders because they were all bunched up and none of them were beginning to break away yet.

It took them less than a minute to blast out from the first turn and skitter down to where they were nearly opposite the pits. Jock had his binoculars, which he raised to his squinting eyes, cursed at and passed to me. I took them and watched Gurney take the lead, come out to the front of the pack and ride blue water. I saw Lamont behind him, riding close and pressing.

And Chugger, who seemed nowhere around at all, abruptly appeared on the other side of Check, staying with him all the way up to the north turn.

Jock stamped and howled and I held my breath when they slatted in to the big pylon; and let it out with a whoosh when Gurney disappeared in a welter of sun and spray and Chugger blew out fast and hard on the near side, a bare length short of Check's black stern.

They came down the stretch that way, past the pits, past the committee barge and into the south turn; and came out again on the other side, Check in front with Chugger trailing; not much, a fraction of a length most of the time, but it stretched out long enough to give the heat to Check.

Jock felt better than he had in some time when the three of us went up to one of those carnival booths for a hamburger and a bottle of pop at noon.

"By golly," he said to Chugger, "we've got a pretty fair chance at that. You got a nice, close second, and there's no reason why you can't beat him in the next two heats by the same margin he took you this time."

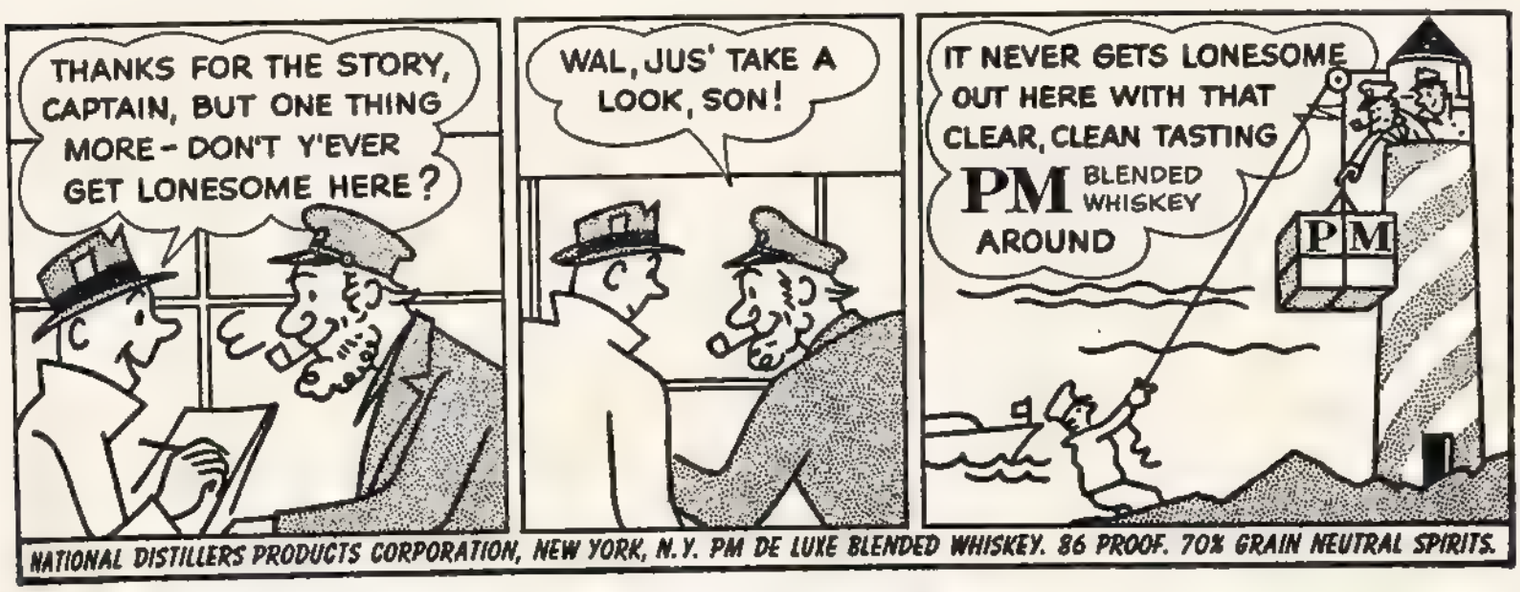
Chugger munched thoughtfully on the hamburger, speaking between bites.

"I don't know," he said. "I had to work hell out of her, and she didn't like it one bit. You know, if we had *Nell* I could beat these other dogs; except Gurney and Lamont. And a nice, safe third ain't to be sneezed at."

Jock looked at me, and for a moment I thought he was going to tell Chugger about the fifteen, but he didn't. He just patted Chugger on the back and said he was sure doing O K. just the way things were.

"Another thing," Chugger said, "the wind's changing. It's swinging around to the east."

I hadn't noticed, but when I turned around and looked I saw that it was. It had gone around to the south and seemed


THANKS FOR THE STORY, CAPTAIN, BUT ONE THING MORE - DON'T Y'EVER GET LONESOME HERE?
WAL, JUS' TAKE A LOOK, SON!
IT NEVER GETS LONESOME OUT HERE WITH THAT CLEAR, CLEAN TASTING PM BLENDED WHISKEY AROUND
PM
NATIONAL DISTILLERS PRODUCTS CORPORATION, NEW YORK, N.Y. PM DE LUXE BLENDED WHISKEY. 86 PROOF. 70% GRAIN NEUTRAL SPIRITS.

to be creeping over to the east. I could see it out on the open lake when the water got blue and black when the gusts hit it, and even in the lagoon where the little catspaws were scratching at the surface in passing.

He was right, damn it.

He finished his root-beer and we hustled him back down to the boat for the second heat, Jock fussing nervously with this and that until the engine turned over and sent *Typhoon* out onto the course again; and into a good race.

That it was, the best race she ran that year. She slithered and skated and howled and roared her way across those thirty miles with Chugger getting away in front and staying there all the way. He was not shaded at all that time, and when he bounced over the line in a flurry of spray Lamont rode two lengths behind.

And Jock got lyrical and danced and shouted, and I guess that I did too; but when Chugger swung into the pits I saw his face, and my heart lurched and Jock's eyes turned black.

"It's like I said," Chugger remarked when the engine died. "I'm afraid she's done."

"She ain't burned up, is she?" Jock asked.

He looked like the whole world had caved in.

"No, but she's passing oil. She needs new rings already. Even so, I don't think she'll make the third heat. It's getting rougher all the time out there."

"Hell she won't," Jock said, somehow buoyed up. "Put new rings in her. You've got all night and it's only eighty miles back to the Yard." He turned to me. "You go with him, Georgie."

Chugger shook his head.

"I can do it myself. I don't need no help for this. And if I do, there's guys at the Yard."

Jock demurred, but Chugger'd made up his mind. If it was going to be done he would do it himself. That was that and we concurred.

THE morning dawned bright and brisk and Jock and I were down at the course early to watch the east wind kick the water into a ten inch chop. He shook his head and looked sad, as though it foretokened something ominous.

"I wish he was here," he said. "Where in the hell could he be, anyway? The heat's at ten."

I didn't know and I wouldn't guess, and Jock kept muttering and fretting and studying his watch, and finally at nine-thirty he clutched my arm suddenly and croaked.

"There he comes. Over there."

I turned and looked, watching Jock's green sedan thread through the trailers, parked cars and stacked boats. The trailer followed obediently, but when I got a good look at it I felt my insides liquefy. Beside me, Jock moaned softly and sank down on the top of a fuel can. I shook my head slowly, trying not to believe what Chugger had done. But I had to. It was there, or rather, she was there, *Nell,* the old dowager, riding in for a gay day in Chicago.

"We should have told him," Jock wept. "We should have told him. God, what a pea-brain." He wandered off then, like a stricken man when Chugger weaved the trailer into the pits. I was so sore I was nearly speechless, but I managed to babble something about Jock's fifteen grand. And Chugger smiled and said he knew.

He smiled some more, but wouldn't say anything, and when he saw Jock tottering around by himself he merely clucked and shook his head a few times. *Nell* was in the water then, and the other boats were storming out for the final run. Chugger climbed in and kicked her over. He grinned again and waved.

I waved back, the way you do at a small child who is leaving for school in the morning.

Since I expected nothing but the complete smashing of any hopes we might have had, I wasn't even faintly surprised to see *Nell* cross the starting line in seventh place, and it would have been eighth if Sid DuRoche's boat hadn't wallowed and conked out in a great big wave of blue water.

Chugger skipped around DuRoche and lit out after the rest of the pack, going into the first turn just as the leaders, Lamont and Gurney, were coming out on the far side. *Nell* took the turn nice, and if there hadn't been that big wad riding

her deck I would have enjoyed watching her have another fling at life.

As it was I had a sour, sunken feeling in my middle which kept sinking lower and getting heavier as the time went on. When Chugger came out of the first turn he trailed the field by a good hundred yards, Lamont nearly up in line with the pits while *Nell* leveled out beyond the last pylon.

And it got worse.

She was a beautiful thing to watch, was old *Nell*. She had a grace and a manner with the rough chop that the others didn't have. She just seemed to skim over the stuff, and since the wind was from the east I could hear the high, sweet hum of her engine, which though some four hundred cubic inches smaller than the others, seemed to be running smoother; not working so hard, nor taking the jolts of the others.

But races don't pay off on beauty and nice sounds, and *Nell* kept falling farther and farther back.

At the end of the second lap Chugger lagged a half mile. Old *Nell* danced past the pits on her transom and aimed her bow for the south turn. Far around on the other side Gurney stalled again and Lamont passed him, easily, not working hard, just taking it easy; but I knew that he could do that and still win, probably figuring he'd rather save his boat and make sure of the fifteen than knock himself out driving a hot race. He didn't have much of anything to worry about that I could see.

Nell stormed on down toward the pylon and as I followed her along the shore and into the turn my eyes drifted a little to the right and I saw Jock standing there with his hands jammed deep into his dungarees. He looked sad and disconsolate, and every few seconds he'd kick at a rock or a stone. I could almost read his mind, and it wasn't pleasant.

When the leaders came out of the turn and into the backstretch the heat was nearly half over. I could see Check topping the chop in a fine mist of spray, and as he came down abreast of me I could hear the banshee wail of the blower and then the heavy snarl of the engine. And after him came Fanning and Davis and Versick, going by in a scream and a roar—and then *Nell*, up in fifth place! And going by in the high *woo-o-o-o-o* of *Typhoon's* blower!

"By God! He's lost his mind completely!" It was Jock, looking wild and climbing back into the pit.

I didn't give him any argument on that, but if Chugger's brains were addled they were beginning to produce something amazing in the way or results. *Nell* moved up fast, skimming the water like a golden phantom and kicking out a high rooster-tail that trailed far behind.

"She'll blow every brass screw in her!" Jock croaked.

But she didn't. Chugger kept moving up, fast and nearly all the way out of the water. On the north turn he swung in close, shaved the pylon and left Versick in his wake when he came out on the shore side, heading south. Old *Nell* was booming.

She came by the pits like a wild thing, winding up higher than I'd ever heard and going a damned sight faster than I thought she could. She ran smooth and she ran light.

The chop didn't seem to be bothering her at all, and I remembered then what a good rough-water boat she'd always been. And I wondered too if that might have occurred to Chugger. Or maybe it was just blind love with him.

Whatever it was it didn't matter because she kept right on going. She didn't blow and she didn't unravel. He sneaked up quick on Davis and Fanning on the fourth lap and passed them in a shower of white water on the backstretch, and by the time he came out of the north turn he was nosing the white foam of Check's wake.

He stayed that way, right behind him all the way through the fifth and into the sixth and last. I don't know if Check knew he was there or not, but I don't think he did because he made no move to break his easy stride. Beside me, Jock was sitting down again and beating his head with his hands.

All the way through the sixth lap my blood pressure kept kiting; and all the while Chugger kept trailing, down past the pits, into the south turn, down the backstretch and into the north turn. But

(Continued on page 129)

CURSE OF THE SHINING STONES

By
W. D. HOFFMAN

Buchara was knocked down and clubbed by the enraged natives — and then I saw the giant Xosas springing toward me.

ILLUSTRATED BY
FRANK KRAMER

THE black was staggering. Still Buchara wielded the hippo-hide sjambok, its lash eating into the Zulu's flesh. Oozing red veins marked the glistening skin of the victim.

I turned, sickened at the sight. Hard-boiled as any of the mines police in going after the diamond smugglers, I hated torture. The Portogreek overseer was exceeding his authority, yet I had no right to interfere. Buchara was head of the Kaffir gangs, with instructions to stop the filching among the blacks, but use of the whip was against Syndicate regulations.

The lashing took place in an obscure corner of the compound behind the workers' shacks, out of sight of Captain Hongward. I could see the captain standing back at the Hole looking my way. His intent, searching eyes were getting on my nerves. He probably suspected me of knowing where the diamonds were going. I in turn suspected even he might be involved. Things had got to such a state

everybody mistrusted everybody else, even the sleuths. My fear was that Captain Hongward might try to frame me to protect himself.

I could hear the terrible lash of Buchara, hissing, exploding. Off in the Hole the Basuto workers, Xosas Kaffirs, mixed Bantus and Zulus, toiled in the sultry heat, ignorant of the whipping. Only a few off-shift blacks were in this housing section of the compound. Buchara's brutality, turned my sympathies toward the Kaffirs. They were like children. If corrupted by the Illicit Diamond Buyers, the real solution was more I. D. B. prosecutions outside the mines.

A low wail from an old Zulu in the doorway of a corrugated iron shack drew my glance again to the torture scene. Now the victim was sinking to his knees, his bloody kaross touching the ground. His chin was still raised; there was a calm haughtiness in his dusky eyes. Brave men, those Zulus, and of splendid physique. But there is an end to human endurance. Gradually as the whip continued to lash his bleeding body the black man went down on his face. He lay unmoving, and I knew he was unconscious.

A runner now left the enclosure in a wild race toward the main compound and the mines. Buchara wiped his sweating brow, his Portogreek countenance ugly with exultation. He wielded the sjambok over his head, ordering a pair of Kaffirs to carry the victim of his lash across the compound into the field hospital.

I KNEW well enough Buchara had exceeded his authority, yet it was not my business to tell him so. But when he strode nearer, my Wyoming blood was choking me. I challenged him. "The G. M. wouldn't stand for that, Buchara. You did it out of sight of the main compound, I notice. You're a damned low dog and worse than the Kaffirs."

Buchara stopped. His eyes were cold, his small dark red mouth hard and cruel. "You—you—!" he began, but feared to use the word, knowing I carried a gun. "He was just another of your black pets, Ensley. Caught with a stone in his mouth. I'll break it up if I have to cut them to pieces. That's orders."

Off in the distance Kaffirs on the crushers, the sorting shed and in the Hole halted work, muttering in an ominous roar. The runner had carried the news of the whipping. Some of the most daring began to trot toward the housing yard, their oxtail girdles swaying, armlets and anklets gleaming, feathers waving as their lithe bodies covered the ground. Now a calabash drum sounded in a steady, sinister beat from a zinc-and-iron shanty. A throbbing chant arose from hundreds of throats, sullen, rebellion-laden.

"I believe you lie," I answered the overseer. "The Syndicate would never stand for that sort of thing."

The mixed blood of the Portogreek went black in his sodden face. "You sneaked in here to spy on me, did you? Stand back, you damned Yankee blighter!" He lifted the sjambok in a threatening gesture.

Sight of that deadly whip got me. I struck his leering face with a fist that had a hard lift behind it. Buchara went down like a sack of diamond mud.

Blacks were swarming into the yard. I sensed the thrill among them as they stared toward me and the fallen overseer. Their mournful chant took on a shriller note. For a minute I regretted the blow, fearing a dangerous outbreak if they killed Buchara. Fortunately he was able to drag himself back on his stocky legs.

We faced each other a full minute. I knew the Portogreek was a coward at heart, and in spite of the whip he feared me. "So?" he stammered, cravenly, wiping his battered mouth. "You've made more friends among the jackals by that, Ensley."

He lumbered off, muttering what he dared not call me openly.

The Zulu chant became a wail of agony and of protest. I squinted toward the distant field hospital. Dr. Jeffrey stood there waiting while they carried the unconscious victim through the door.

Attracted by the running blacks, Captain Hongward of the mines police approached me from his quarters. With him was the visiting chief of the South African Constabulary, Dawson. As I crossed to meet them, the chant of the natives broke into the equivalent of a cheer. *"Baas-Inkoos!* Son of the Yel-

low-Maned One!" Knocking down Buchara had made me a hero among the Zulus. Yet I noticed a giant Xosas subboss eyeing me with sinister hostility. I had had a little trouble with this fellow before. He was known as the Lizard, *Lagavaan*. His six months' contract service was up and he was leaving today.

"You hit him?" rapped Captain Hongward. "Serious business, Ensley." His jaw squared. "Meet me in the G. M.'s office in the morning."

I nodded. Losing my job would be better than jail on a frameup charge. The drum beats had stopped—a guard had ordered the weazened old drummer out of the shanty.

Later in the afternoon at the Xosas pit in the Hole a hurried gathering of officials took place. They were taking out of the blue earth a whitish mass that looked like rock salt, the size of a pigeon's egg. It had been found before the usual trip through the crushers. Kaffirs were muttering *"blink klip,"* shining stone. Guard lines were quickly thrown around the workers. Buchara, the overseer, wielded a piece of pipe, driving the Kaffirs back. Others crowded up, jabbering excitedly.

The commissioner's agent gave his opinion the diamond was pure-water of equal quality with the best De Beer's or Premier. Laughingly he named the new find "Dawson" in honor of the visiting chief of the Constabulary.

Suddenly the blacks rushed Buchara. He had done something I did not see. The pipe was wrenched from his hand; he was clubbed by the enraged natives, knocked down and a dozen of the blacks leaped upon him, kicking the life out of him. As the guards rushed to his aid I saw the giant Xosas, the Lizard, springing toward me with the uplifted pipe in his huge hand. Before I could back off or pull my gun he had struck me through the helmet.

Knocked senseless for the moment, my head was a wrenching, exploding chaos. Visions of a hundred battling blacks danced through my brain. Gradually I fought off the dizzy nausea. Captain Hongward and Dawson were helping me back out of the pit.

Guards at gun point held the furious Zulus who had bounded to my aid when the Xosas Kaffir attacked. The Lizard was badly mauled, would have been clubbed to death but for the guns of the guards. But those guns could not save Buchara. The brutal Portogreek whipper was dead.

IN THE hospital Dr. Jeffrey looked me over and I was given leave for the day. "Well, old chap," he said, "you got yourself out of hand with Buchara. Now the blacks have killed him. I hope they don't charge you with incitement to murder. I thought you Americans were made of sterner stuff, eh what?"

"Buchara had it coming," I said, grimly, and told how he had exceeded authority in using the sjambok. "That Zulu, Doctor—did he come through?"

"No. Ruptured appendix," Jeffrey answered.

"Ruptured appendix?" I stared into the ether-fumed operating room.

"The blighter would have died anyway, within a week."

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As I looked into his pinched face and the pale gray eyes I marveled at his professional callousness. "By the by, Ensley," he said, "can't you and Marcia be my guests at the Rhodes Jubilee Thursday evening?"

I evaded that. My wife did not much care for Dr. Jeffrey. Marcia, a Montana girl, was unquestionably one of the most beautiful women in South Africa. She was returning that evening by capecart from a blesbok-shooting trip into the veldt with the colonial secretary's party, carrying her Montana love of hunting into the Colony.

"Take a rest for a few days," Jeffrey advised with a laugh. "From the looks of that riot I'd say you weren't too safe in the compound from now on."

That evening at the Diamondfields club I ran into General Manager Rafflehold. Over his whisky-soda he beckoned me to his table. I hastened to block immediate discharge by narrating the whipping incident.

"Buchara over-stepped himself," the G. M. assented, frowning. "That doesn't justify his murder. Do you know anything, Ensley—what happened during the riot?"

It was a queer question and I did not get it at the time. I told what I had seen, and argued that our efforts should be concentrated on the I. D. B.'s outside the compound for awhile.

Rafflehold scowled. "More would take their place. The jails are full of them, and still they operate." He eyed me pityingly. "You came highly recommended, Ensley. Experience checking highgraders in America and all that. Yet smuggling goes on right under your nose."

"I doubt the blacks are doing most of it," I said, stubbornly.

"You don't know, my man. You don't even know what happened this afternoon. Ask Captain Hongward." He gave me a penetrating look, as though he suspected me. Then he went on to say how serious the Syndicate regarded the exportation of uncut I. D. B. stones to New York and Amsterdam, flooding the market, threatening the world price on diamonds, no more valuable than opals if the vaults of the Syndicate alone were thrown open.

"There's a trick in the compound," he declared angrily. "I counted upon you to learn what it was." Ironically he repeated the old story of carrier pigeons, the armpit incision, the "hungry dog" fed diamond-encrusted meat; reiterated how when the recreational director allowed the blacks to play American baseball, an over-the-fence ball was found loaded with gems; how even a boxing kangaroo had been brought into the compound and its pouch stuffed with stones.

"We're smuggler-proof with a charged fence," he scoffed, "and yet the traffic goes on. Great Scott, Ensley, haven't you got an idea?"

I was making a lame defense when Captain Hongward entered. When Rafflehold was through, the captain called me to his rooms. "You'll have to strip," he said.

I obeyed readily, submitting to the search, knowing there must be a reason for such extraordinary precautions. Hongward was close-mouthed until he had done his duty. "Regulations, old fellow," he said, then, genially. "Nobody was exempt—not even myself. The Dawson diamond disappeared during the riot this afternoon at the Xosas pit."

I was speechless. That was what the G. M. had meant when he said I didn't know anything.

"Yes," Hongward went on, blandly. "It will jolly well cost us all our posts uness we recover it. The stockade is full of blacks under examination, and charged with Buchara's murder. We've gone over the whites—you're the last. The devil of it is, everybody is suspected." He laughed uneasily, watching me out of the corner of his eye. "I wouldn't be surprised if you had it in the back of your head that even I might be in on it, eh, what?"

I was startled at his manner. There was a threat behind the bantering question. He had only implanted more deeply the ugly idea I had in mind.

"I acquit you," I returned, making a joke of it.

"A real sleuth has got to suspect his own brother in this game," he went on, with a shrug. "That's the hell of not having anything to work on. The plunder doesn't fly out, on pigeon's wings or by airplane, that's certain. Yet it goes out by physical means. It's our job to learn how." His pupils contracted into an intent

stare. "I say, old fellow," he went on, slowly, "since you've talked to the G. M., forget that meeting in his office. You're not going to be discharged for knocking Buchara down."

"Thanks." I wondered if he didn't need me on the job for a more serious charge he was considering.

It was in my mind to go to work that very night among some I. D. B. suspects outside the compound. On going down to the transport station I learned my wife had already arrived. I hurried out to our cottage. Marcia, still in hunting togs, seemed upset. As she turned to kiss me I noticed she was pale in spite of the sun-tan from the trek.

"Dr. Jeffrey was here," she said in a disgusted tone of voice. "I didn't know whether I should tell you."

I did not understand at first. "But why? Why shouldn't you tell me?"

"I had just arrived home from the trek," she said angrily. "Then he came, inviting me to the dance Thursday night with you. He said you hadn't made up your mind, and he would take me if you didn't go. I never liked him; he had shown too darned much interest in me before, though I never had mentioned it, knowing your temper—and I had heard he was somewhat of a rake. He made advances, said he was infatuated and that sort of rot. Suddenly he tried to kiss me and I struck him and ordered him out."

I leaped to my feet, dumbfounded. "I'll get the dog for that," I cried. Marcia shook me. "There, I knew you would fly off the handle. Well, the rotter wouldn't leave until I told him you were coming. He begged me not to tell you, on account of his position; also said it would make an ugly situation for me, if you tried to force a scandal of it. Better not make anything of it, Chuck, except to tell him to watch his step."

For the first time since our wedding my mind rocked with jealousy, with hate of a man because of Marcia. But with my wife in my arms, tender with emotion, I knew she was in no way to blame for what had happened. Dr. Jeffrey would answer to me, privately and effectively.

"Say nothing to anyone," I cautioned Marcia. "I've got a night assignment and will be back about midnight. No, it isn't to go after that crawling insect—just yet." I wanted to prevent public gossiping that might involve Marcia's name with the dapper doctor; then too the trip to Flavin's would help drive the bitter thing from my thoughts. I related the day's events in the compound, told where I would be, if needed. She begged me to take no unnecessary risks. In my Lizzie I drove out on the country road to the "Queen's Good Fellow."

FLAVIN the Greek conducted a pub and dance establishment that had harbored I. D. B.'s in the past. We'd sent over several Greeks to join the horde in the old Fort prison, Mozambique, Angola and Union. But we never could pin anything on Flavin.

I'd made myself an occasional patron at the place. Flavin, a broad-faced oily white, encouraged European trade, bibulous remittance men, Portuguese and English sailors, Boer-Dutch, with separate accommodations for mixed breeds, Kaffirs and other blacks, an ideal underworld setup for the traffic.

The place was well filled; the noisy crowd helped drive from mind the picture of Jeffrey annoying my devoted, golden-haired Marcia. Flavin, mingling with his customers at the tables and the bar, had his eyes on me from the start. I knew he would tip off those in the trade, but I came out into the open with him now, told him I was looking for the Dawson stone.

His cold eyes did not water. "You can search, *senhor*. I swear I know nothing. I would not take such a risk. This is my business—I do not seek to work on the breakwater. Look around, my friend, and welcome."

Flavin was cunning, if guilty. I watched the Greeks in particular throughout the evening, with an eye on the blacks who might contact them. Several had been released from their long compound service that day. But if there was any transaction among them, I did not discover it. It was after midnight when I decided to leave, intending to return unexpectedly in an hour or two.

At the front entrance a sharp *pang* brought me around with a jerk. In the

door-jamb quivered a long-bladed knife. Instantly four Zulus dashed toward me, jabbering. Others rushed toward a side room. I drew my automatic.

"Lagavaan! Lagavaan!" cried the Zulus, and I knew they meant the Lizard had hurled the knife. Turning, I sped with them back into the pub. Other blacks were hurling chairs and a dop-keg against a side door. We rushed forward as the door crashed inward. There stood the giant Xosas, togged out in a red jacket and dirty soldier's pants. "O *Lagavaan,* evil-doer, you have taken the shining stones," chanted a Zulu. "Our *Baas-Inkoos,* the black man's friend, Son of the Yellow-Maned One, has come to use the white man's magic—"

The Lizard sprang like a huge leopard toward the entrance, leaping high, knocking a pair of Zulus sprawling. I struck at his kinky head with my pistol, hit him a glancing blow. Three other Zulus hurled themselves upon him, dragging him back into the little room. They stretched him out, arms held wide, legs spread, one of them sitting on his chest.

Quickly they applied a refined form of torture; his fingers were bent back and a work-yellowed thumb pressed at his twitching neck behind the ear. His eyes rolled like chalk and his tongue wobbled in and out. At last he was willing to talk. He had stolen diamonds in the compound and turned them over to the Portogreek Buchara, who kept the shining stones in a hollow of the sjambok whipstock. He knew nothing of the big gem, he swore by the great Chaka, the black Napoleon. He did not understand how Buchara had smuggled the contraband out of the compound.

At my command the Zulus released the big Kaffir. It had turned out a fairly good night's work, after all. That whip secret was my first real clew. Smuggling from the compound would probably cease for awhile, with Buchara dead. I put handcuffs on Lagavaan and drove him to the compound detention quarters, then proceeded home.

A light was burning and Marcia was up, though it was past one o'clock in the morning. Our Basuto boy sat on the stoop, a knobkerrie club in his hand. I saw the fright in Marcia's blue eyes as she opened the door at my call. "Did you see anyone out there?" she quavered. "Several men were hiding in the pampa—I don't know whether they were blacks or not."

"I'll go see." I turned, taking the gun from my shoulder holster. My wife clung to me, fearing to let me go.

I pressed her back. "I'll kill the skulkers—"

"Whom will you kill, Ensley?" came the brittle voice of Captain Hongward as he yanked in the door. He walked slowly toward me. "Sorry, old man, but I've got a reason for making another search—been waiting for you. Never mind stripping just yet." He bowed and apologized to Marcia, his rugged face harsh in the lamplight. Stopping close to me, he ran his hands into my pockets.

His gray eyes contracted and his mouth went hard as his fingers scraped the bottom of a coat pocket. Slowly he drew out his hand, opened it and exposed three whitish pebbles the size of a large pea each.

"Blink klips," he said blandly.

I stared at the three rough diamonds. It was hard to believe what I saw. Marcia's face had gone gray. I faced the captain with an effort at control. "I've just been at the Queen's Good Fellow. If those stones were in my pocket, someone there planted them on me," I said levelly. "I just took Lagavaan to the compound jail, but he was handcuffed and could hardly have done it."

"Sorry. You know what this means, Ensley. You'll have to tell that plausible story to the magistrate. Madam," looking grimly at my wife, "I regret this thing had to happen, for your sake."

I SAT down, weak with shock. To have uncut diamonds in one's possession was an inescapable felony, the penalty seven years. Unless I could produce witnesses to prove I had confiscated them as an officer I would be in the same situation as any I. D. B. culprit facing a long sentence at hard labor on the Capetown breakwater.

"Someone in Flavin's pub put them there—to get me out of the way," I choked. "Captain, you don't suspect I'm a criminal, do you?"

"In this game, we've got to suspect even our own brother," Hongward said thinly. "My job is to take you in. But I'm not through yet, Ensley. Hadn't you better save your own time and mine by producing the Dawson stone—or shall I go ahead with the search?"

That angered me. Marcia had flung herself into my arms, sobbing. "Look here, Hongward!" I flared. "If someone didn't slip them into my pocket during the melee when I caught the Lizard tonight, then maybe you did it *just now.*"

"Why would I do that?" he asked.

"For the same reason they might have done it at Flavin's—to put me away right when I'm getting hot on the trail—"

"I'd advise you not to talk yourself into conviction, Ensley," Hongward cut in, sourly. "You're only proving the case by admitting you can't tell the source of the stones, wildly charging even me with planting them on you."

I saw my temper had gotten the best of me. The captain stepped to the door, called in three of my fellow officers. The next hour saw me searched to the skin and the house ransacked from ceiling to plumbing, even the pipes being sounded in the hunt for the big Dawson stone.

"Too bad," Hongward said at last. "Maybe you've got it inside the compound yet. I feel sorry for you and Mrs. Ensley, too. She'll have to get along without you for quite awhile, I fear. It's late," he added brusquely. "I'll hold several men outside. You can get some sleep and go along to the magistrate in the morning." Dismissing his men, he bowed to my wife, walked out and re-locked the door with his own passkey.

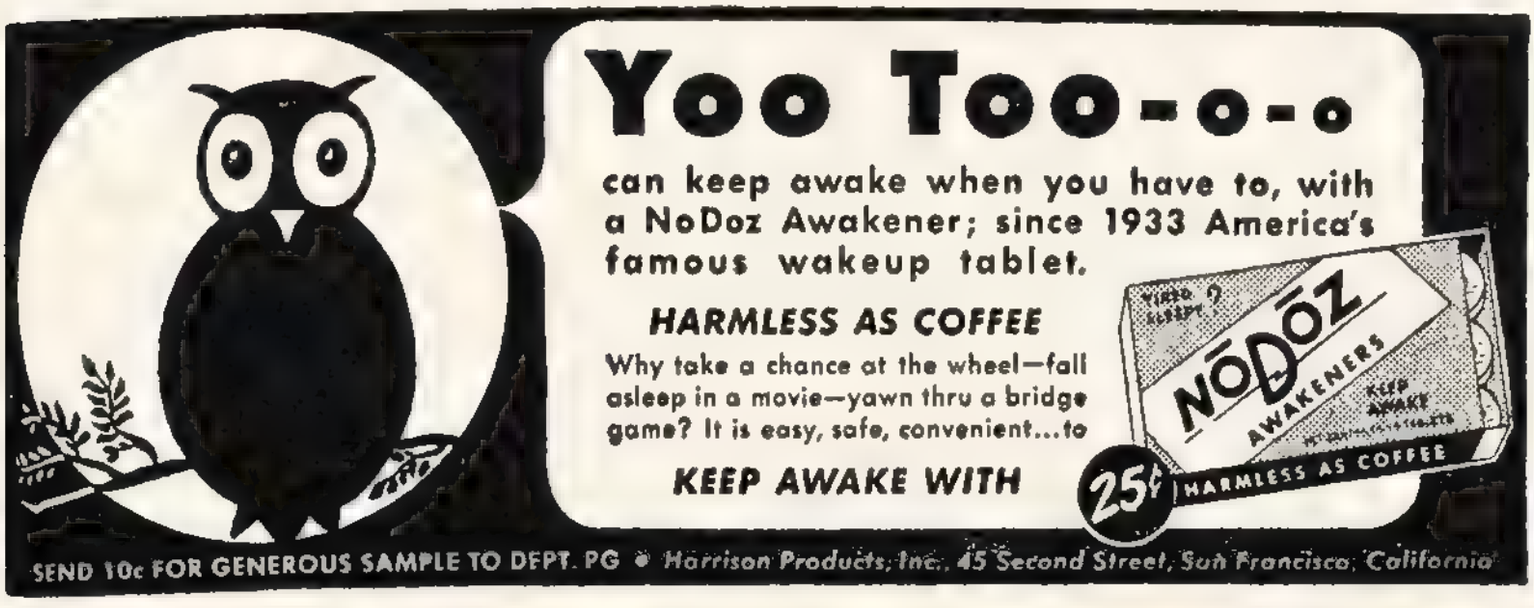
Maybe it was decent of him to give me this consideration on account of the injury I had suffered in the riot. I wasn't able to make up my mind about him, but the suspicion that he had crowded his hand in my pocket with the diamonds already in his fingers persisted. The deaf ear he turned to my account of the Flavin raid, the knife attempt on my life and the Lizard's arrest, showed him to be as hard as the missing stones he sought—maybe because he was blind to everything but his duty, maybe for another reason.

I got little sleep, with the police guard patrolling the yard, with the prospect of years in the penitentiary. But I thought it all out. I was trapped unless I could find the man who had planted the evidence on me and prove he had done it. This looked hopeless, with me in custody. When Hongward returned in the morning I stalled for time.

"If you'll take me to the compound on the way to the magistrate, I'll show you some real evidence," I offered. The whipstock was in my mind and I wanted to study Hongward's reaction to that. Also I wanted to get into the compound for a last-minute punch at Dr. Jeffrey before the jail doors clanged shut behind me.

The captain hesitated, eyeing me suspiciously. I had not told him of the sjambok; maybe he did not want any real evidence, if he was mixed up in the thing. I had to let him think I was coming clean with a deal involving the blacks. "No shenanigans," the captain warned as I tore myself from my distraught wife and entered his car.

On passing through the compound gate,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I led Hongward around to the slain Portogreek's quarters and found the sjambok without trouble. Fingering the butt of the whip I soon discovered a screw cap of metal. When opened, it showed the stock was hollow, as the Lizard had said.

Hongward's eyes were veiled as he looked at it. "Buchara," he muttered. "He got the stones from the blacks, slipped them into the whipstock, then passed them to you." His heavy neck veins bulged. "But even you had to submit to search on leaving. How did you do it, Ensley?"

"Maybe I didn't," I said, banteringly. "Maybe someone else was the smuggler."

"You said you'd have some real evidence," he grated. "If this is the extent of it, we'll be moving on."

I was stumped, desperately determined to delay arraignment and jail without bond. I couldn't tell a plausible lie even had I wanted to, lacking the key to the all-important part of the compound-running. That whip, I knew, had never been taken out of the mine—Buchara would not have dared let it be known he was using such an instrument of punishment.

"Come along, if that's all you're telling," Hongward ordered.

"Let's go into the hospital," I proposed, pretending there might be a link in the evidence there. My real object now was to fly at Dr. Jeffrey's throat or club him with anything in sight, as a parting shot to the outside world. The thought of Marcia being alone for seven years in the same colony with Jeffrey was worse torture than the whip would have been.

"Don't forget we're after the Dawson stone," Hongward reminded, assenting grudgingly.

AS WE passed the Hole, the Zulus raised a chorus of "*Baas-Inkoos*! The boss-friend—Son of the Yellow-Maned One! *Matagati*! The Wise Man Who Searches for the Big Shining Stone!" Bowing and scraping, they made it known the Ama-Zulu were my friends and servants. I turned to the captain. "What's going to happen to those boys who killed Buchara?"

He jerked his thumb toward the detention jail at the edge of the compound. "They'll all be given long terms for that, after Dr. Jeffrey goes over their naked bodies with the X-rays for hidden stones." His voice chilled. "Get the Dawson diamond." I felt his gun boring into my side.

"That stone disappeared in the riot, after I was hit over the head," I scoffed.

"True," Hongward gritted, "but you know how it was accomplished. You can tell where the Dawson is very likely to be. I want that information, Ensley."

He seemed in earnest about it. I could not have given that information any more than the G. M. himself. Knowing a smattering of the Zulu tongue, I called out to the workers in the Hole, "Ama-Zulu! People of the Zulu, attention, *Inkoosiezana!*

"O Brothers of the Yellow-Maned One," I orated in their rounded phrases, "if you love the white friend of the black man, tell me what became of the Big Shining Stone of yesterday. In the name of the Great Chaka and Cetewayo and the mighty *impies* of Dinizulu, let the Big Shining Stone have voice so that your white brother may hear."

It sounded like a lot of hooey, of course, unless you know Zulu nature. I was gambling on the chance that some of the blacks might have seen who took the big diamond during the riot. But from the blank faces of the natives and their silence I knew they were as much in the dark as I was. At that moment I saw Dr. Jeffrey crossing to the detention building where the prisoners were confined.

"Take me there. I think I can get the stone," I told Hongward.

"Another stall?" sneered the captain.

"The big Kaffir I arrested, named Lagavaan, is in there. He's a confederate of Buchara. Maybe I can make him talk."

"It may cut your sentence a little if you do," growled my guard, and we started for the compound jail.

Jeffrey was leaving by a side door with four Kaffir prisoners under guard, taking them to the hospital for examination. Cursing my bad luck, I was forced to delay meeting Jeffrey for the time being. We entered the detention quarters and hunted up the Lizard.

He had been placed in a solitary cell by the jailer after I had delivered him. At the captain's request the jailer unlocked the cell door.

"Go in and talk to him," directed Hongward.

I stepped in, feeling safe against the black with the two armed officers on hand. But the moment I was in, Hongward snapped the lock and rushed away with the jailer.

A disturbance among the prisoners at the rear might have led him to do this, but it looked to me as though he had another object. If in on the traffic, he would know how Lagavaan longed to strangle me. Before I could open my mouth the giant Kaffir sprang at me, his great eyes bulging in a blaze of hate and vengeance. I was unarmed and no match for such a specimen. His fingers locked about my throat like enormous talons and he bore me down to the cell floor, chocking me.

I could hear Hongward talking to the jailer. As the cell whirled and my breath swelled with the wrenching agony of that grip, I saw the burly officer as the real murderer, willing to have me killed because I suspected him. The ape-like Kaffir would have strangled me in a couple of minutes, sparing me the long prison term, but for a grip I managed to get on the little finger of his throttling hand. I twisted it, forced it back, and heard the bone snap. He released his hold, jumped up and got ready for another spring.

Rising quickly, I tried to face him down, pretending fearlessness and mastery. "I came to spare you from the sjambok, Lagavaan," I said, steadily.

From the sudden terror in his eyes I knew he dreaded the whip above everything, even a term in prison. He quailed, staring at me, and I knew I was safe. "Your friend Buchara is dead. I am the only *induana* of the black man who can save you from the torture," I told him in a lame Bantu dialect. "Where is the Big Shining Stone? Out with it!"

"I know not, *Inkoos,*" he wavered, fright in his eyes. "My belly is full of the little shining stones," he went on in his native tongue. "O save me from the whip, friend of the black man. Those who go under the sjambok always join the dead in the Sands of the Kopje." He meant the burial plot beyond the compound.

I realized Lagavaan, attacked and beaten during the riot, had had no part in stealing the Dawson stone, and though he was diamond-studded within from swallowed gems, that did not help me to unearth the prize. Hongward and the jailer returned to the cell. "No dice yet," I told the captain, grimly. "But take me to the hospital to question Jeffrey about his X-ray tests on the prisoners."

To get a chance to confront Jeffrey I was willing to ignore the cell incident. "Don't worry, Ensley, you're scheduled for an X-ray examination yourself," Hongward grunted. I hid my elation. I'd settle with Jeffrey as much as an unarmed man could do it. Then Hongward said the G. M. was waiting to see me.

WE WENT into the Administration office. Rafflehold called me into a private room. "I'm amazed, Ensley, at the news about you," he began. For a time he lectured me about yielding to what the Kaffirs called "the curse of the shining stones," risking the penitentiary for illicit gain, something he never expected of a man of my standing, disgracing myself and bringing sorrow to a young and beautiful wife. Suddenly he leaned forward.

"I don't often do this, Ensley. But the Dawson stone is of such value I'll not prosecute if you produce it or tell us the operating methods of the smugglers so we may find it. Do that and you and your wife may take the first boat and leave South Africa."

I felt like a whipped cur, admiring the G. M. as I did and seeing him regard me as an ungrateful thief. Leaving South Africa in disgrace would have been preferred to what I was facing, yet he might as well have offered me the moon. I denied I knew about the big gem, but it was plain he did not believe me. The interview ended with his fervent promise to prosecute and ask for the seven-year limit.

"Come along, Ensley," Hongward directed. "You'll have to go through with the X-ray routine with the blacks." He escorted me to the hospital.

Dr. Jeffrey and his assistants were busy with the rioters who had killed Buchara, mainly Zulus. It was unlikely any of them had swallowed a stone as large as the Dawson find, but regulations called for examination for smaller gems. "Doctor, you may not have heard of Ensley's arrest," the captain said as Jeffrey came into the waiting room. "We took three uncut *blink klips* from him at his home during the night."

Jeffrey's lightish eyes contracted as he looked at me. I was waiting for him to come a step closer. "By Jove, Ensley," he breathed. "I hate to see you in this fix, old man." His pale, thin face went cold. "Hard on Marcia, eh what?"

My lips were taut and my eyes bored into his. He did not waver, though he must have known from my look that Marcia had told me everything. I edged nearer.

"I feel damned sorry for Marcia," he had the audacity to remark. "Come in, I'll have to X-ray you."

He turned his back. With Hongward I entered the laboratory. An assistant was just finishing with a black and he motioned to the table. "You're next."

I could see nothing but Jeffrey's unhealthy face, measuring it for the blow, the glistening tight skin, the pale eyes, the thin-lipped mouth—those lips he had tried to force on Marcia. My brain went on fire, and I struck.

My fist reached him full on the mouth, drawing blood on my knuckles, loosening a tooth or two, but he caught himself as he staggered back, holding his legs. The captain grabbed me, uttering an oath.

Jeffrey tried to laugh, his bruised mouth working. "It's a personal matter between us, Captain," he said, with surprising calm. "I don't think he'll explain. But I'll have to strap him to the table or he might do it again." He called to a young English interne and with the willing help of Hongward raised me to the table and buckled me down with straps used for that purpose on unruly blacks. I was held down by arms and legs. The metal carrier was rolled over under the X-ray machine.

"You needn't wait, Captain," Jeffrey said. "It may take an hour on account of the rushing business this morning."

Under guard, more blacks were filing into the waiting room and among them I glimpsed Lagavaan, the Lizard, as they passed the door. Fright was in his ebony face, doubtless because he knew those swallowed gems would be located by the white man's wizardry, then he would go to the breakwater.

An assistant moved the ray focus-finder above me, the machine hissing intermittently as the power was applied. While this was going on, Jeffrey directed a guard to bring Lagavaan into his office. They were there for some time, then the Kaffir was wheeled out on a narrow surgical table into the operating room. Jeffrey now came to me, his swollen, lacerated mouth greasy with salve, took my temperature and some drops of blood from my veins, placing them between squares of glass. Taking my blood count. I wondered about that.

He was gone for fifteen minutes, then returned and wheeled me into the operating room with the Lizard. That alarmed me. "What's this?" I gritted between my teeth.

Jeffrey laughed, turned and locked the door, leaving me alone with him. "Appendicitis," he said, softly.

My spine went suddenly cold. He turned to the Kaffir, who like me was strapped in, told him in dialect not to be afraid—that I alone would go under the knife.

"Marcia told you?" he asked, blandly. My nostrils were stinging with the pungent odor of ether.

"Is this murder . . . ?" I choked, as he clamped the ether pack over my mouth and nostrils, acting as his own anesthetist. I fought to raise my arms to fight him, bulging the straps, but they held firm.

Jeffrey had me completely at his mercy. He had not covered my eyes; I could see his white, deadly face, like that of a man wasting from narcotics, and the pin-point pupils were those of an addict. In that terrible moment I realized I was in the grip of a fiend. He was probably engaged in the illicit diamond traffic—

Like an electric shock the truth hit me. It was Dr. Jeffrey, in our home, who had planted those uncut stones on me. He had placed them in the pocket of my suit coat hanging on the wall while he visited

Marcia. I had forgotten until this moment I had taken off my work jacket and donned the coat before going to the Queen's Good Fellow.

I TRIED to cry out, but only a muffled squeak came from the ether pack. The fumes of the drug were strangling me. "Breathe deeply," he whispered into my ear. "You'll be under in a minute. Before you go, my dear fellow, please realize this is for my own protection—since you know so much. With Buchara gone and you gone, I'll take care of my friend Lagavaan." His words were growing fainter as the drug began to affect me.

I could hardly strain at the straps now, but his callous, lime-colored face was as vivid before my eyes as ever. Now his free hand raised, holding before my gaze the big Dawson diamond. "Since you are such a smart detective, look at it," he murmured. "I had intended to sew it up in Lagavaan with some others, so Senhor Flavin could locate it on the Kopje *in his grave.* But now I think I'll let you be the carrier, my clever friend. Quite a joke, what—Ensley smuggling out the big stone, after all! Can you hear me? I'll help Marcia with the funeral arrangements. Sweet dreams and goodbye . . ."

I was passing out; a great round point of purple light seemed to whirl far out in the heavens and then draw down upon me.

In that twilight zone I was faintly conscious of a thumping sound, of a struggle. I sucked in a strangled breath, then a quick succession of life-giving draughts that revived me, and realized the pack was off my face.

The giant Kaffir and the doctor were tumbling wildly about the room. I knew Lagavaan's muscular body had burst the straps of the table as in a frenzy of fear he had seen what Jeffrey was doing to me, believing his turn would be next. Abruptly I saw the Lizard plunging headlong through the window, shattering the glass all about.

Jeffrey staggered to the door, turned the lock, and a revolver was in his hand. I could hear the Kaffir yelling. Jeffrey dashed out; three quick shots roared in the compound. The cries of the Xosas giant broke off.

In a moment Jeffrey ran back into the surgery, panting and excited, the gun still in his hand. He turned the key in the lock, and in terror I saw him take up the ether pack once more.

Having killed the big Lagavaan, he was going to finish the job of wiping out the evidence, seeing to it that I died in the operation, using my body as a ghoulish device for running the compound gates. Only the wild dream of a dope addict could have conceived it.

My will battled against the weakening tide overwhelming me, with Marcia seeming to beckon me. A tremendous roar broke upon my ears. I thought it was the ether. Through my brain rushed a picture of Buchara plying the torturous sjambok, lashing struggling Kaffirs into unconsciousness so that Jeffrey might ply his murder trade at intervals to furnish human deposit boxes for illicit gems.

The building shook. A weird, frenzied

(Continued on page 128)

Shocking Facts about PIN-WORMS

You may think that Pin-Worm infection is rare and strikes only "careless" families —that, therefore, your children are safe.

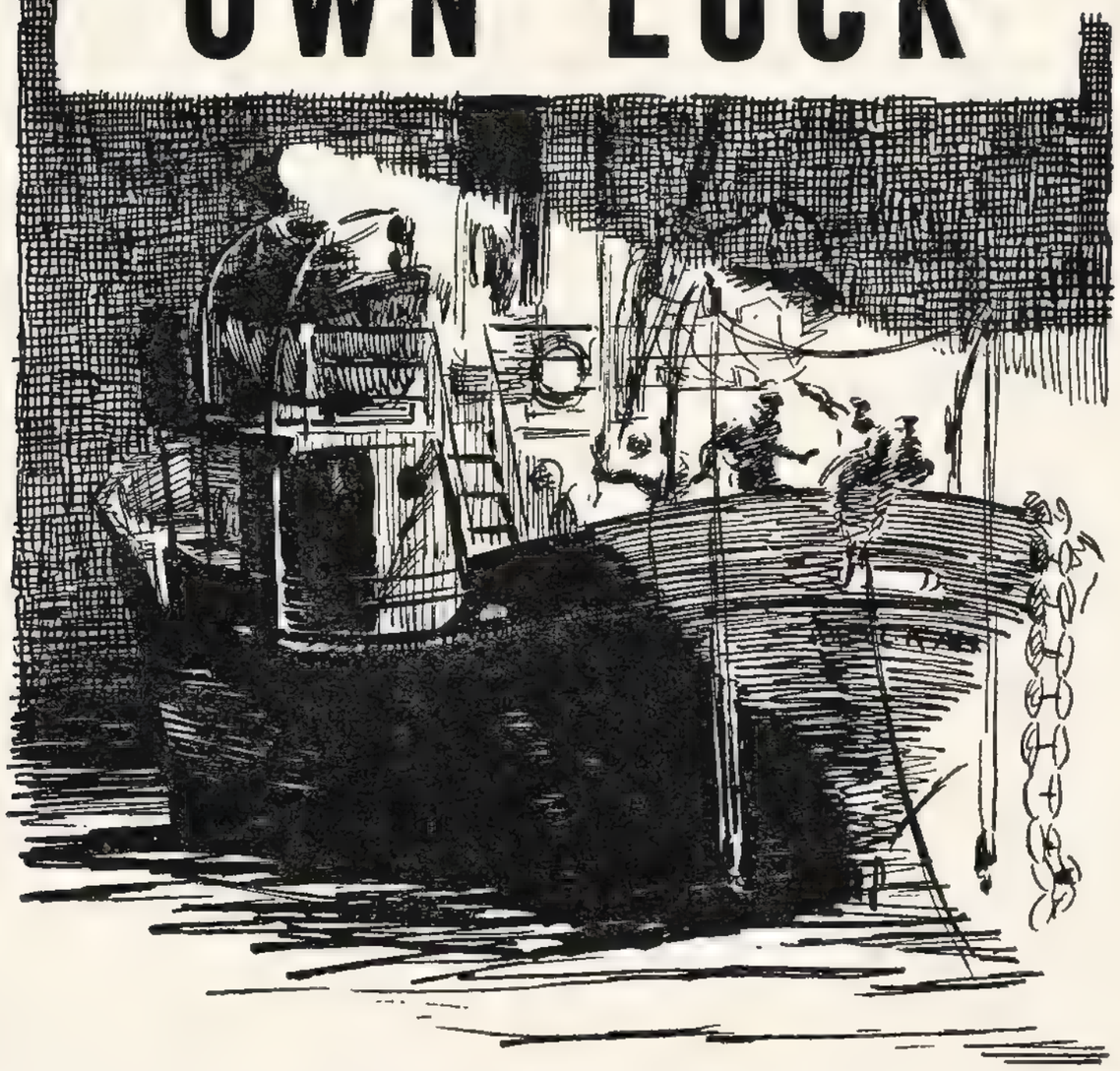
Don't you believe it! Medical experts report that at least *one out of every three persons* examined, adults and children alike, was a victim of Pin-Worms. And this embarrassing, annoying condition can spread through entire families.

There's no need to take chances with this ugly pest. A medically approved, scientific treatment now destroys Pin-Worms easily and effectively. This remedy is **Jayne's P-W Vermifuge** developed by the famous Jayne Co., specialists in worm remedies for over 100 years.

So watch for the warning signs, especially the tormenting rectal itch. Then ask your druggist for **P-W**, the small, easy-to-take tablets that act in a special way to bring real relief from Pin-Worms.

Just Remember: P-W ® for Pin-Worms

MAKE YOUR OWN LUCK



DAN CARPENTER'S fingers were itching for the wheel. He was master of this small ship and she was making her first cargo port. Why shouldn't he take her in?

He lifted his binoculars and stared hard at the break in the coast that was San Ybel. Above, as if poised to pounce on the little port, crowded the wrinkled mountains of Puerto Rico.

At the wheel John Lane straightened his tall body and glanced inquiringly at Dan.

"You know this place, John," Dan Carpenter said and leaned moodily against the side panel of the *Islander's* tiny wheelhouse. Masterly inaction!

A ship is a dead thing without a crew. But only a skipper, he was discovering, knew what a headache a crew was.

He had spent plenty to make sure there was nothing wrong with his ship, such as she was, a hundred-ten-foot sub-chaser converted to carry cargo. But sure as shooting there was something wrong with his crew. That was the stiff job, nursemaiding the crew, not handling the ship.

"I ought to be carrying a lousy psychologist in davits aft," he muttered sourly. "What's eating this bunch?"

ILLUSTRATED BY CHARLES GEER

He was her master, Captain Dan Carpenter, and he couldn't show distrust of his mate, of his engineer, of his cook or of his three deckhands, although every last one of them was slant-eyed about something. Or maybe about somebody; for example, tall John Lane there at the wheel, once her master and owner, now her mate.

Just what did they anticipate? Treachery? Or no pay? Anyhow, this unease was for him to soothe. He was her master, their papa, if he was the youngest guy in the ship.

The *Islander* approached the erratic clangor of the sea buoy. No pilot offered, although the pilot would be in the port charges.

The little ship, her Diesels throttled well down, entered a channel that threaded a way through broad flats. John Lane's spare, sun-wrinkled hands eased over the

A new light suddenly flooded the* Belle Kate's *deck, and a siren let go a scream of warning.

RICHARD HOWELLS WATKINS

wheel carefully to compensate for a stiff easterly that hit her on the beam. The man was a seaman, sure.

Every one of these six, including Lane, seemed to be waiting for something to happen, something not nice.

Dan Carpenter scrutinized the port. Not a ship stirring of the handful within, but of course this was Sunday.

"Think Cap'n Colmar's right about there being some cargo here?" Dan asked.

"He has a nose for freights, skipper," John Lane said tonelessly. He squinted his eyes. "There's his *Belle Kate* in line with the cathedral."

The *Islander's* engineer, Cliff Bronson, stuck his greasy visored cap into the wheelhouse. He was no bigger than a jockey but he never let it bother him.

"You can't spot crated pineapple from here, skipper," he said, grinning. "Relax."

"I'm looking for an engineer who'll stand by his motors while we're entering port," Dan said.

"Going, ain't I? Hey!" Cliff jerked a thumb and screwed up his face mysteriously.

Dan Carpenter stepped down out of the pilothouse and followed the small engineer aft to the engineroom companion.

Cliff jerked his thumb again. "John Lane's a good seaman and a square enough guy though shy and standoffish," he said. "But his luck is strictly Class Z."

So it was Lane who caused this unease! Lane and his luck!

"Well?" Dan's voice was frosty.

"I'm scared a meteor will sock him just as he's trying to lay her alongside. You better take her yourself, skipper."

"Men make their own luck," Dan said. "Forget it."

"Forget how he lost six weeks at Cienfuegos waiting for a boat charter that didn't show? How he was caught laid up in a shipyard when the boys went on strike? How he had her near burnt up on him in Port au Prince? How—"

"If you've got any charge to make against Lane, spit it out, Cliff," Dan said crisply. "Otherwise go take a look at your lube oil gauges. I'm not firing a man for having bad luck."

"Charge? I like the guy," Cliff protested. "It's just I don't want to see you lose the *Islander* back to that money lendin' cap'n Colmar like he did. And—O.K., I'm going!"

HE SHOT feet first down the oily ladder as if intent on suicide. His heel hooked into an iron rung. He fell heavily to the plates and sprawled there motionless.

Dan slid down and picked him up After a moment Cliff waggled his scrawny neck feebly.

"Never did that before in my life," he muttered. "See what I mean?"

"You were due for it," Dan said, holding him up. "All right now?"

The ship's bottom rose abruptly under them. They fell together. The port Diesel lifted on its bed, its shaft breaking into shattering clamor. Cliff scrambled up and staggered forward. Dan beat him to the controls and killed the motor.

"Start your bilge pump!" Dan shouted. "She's holed!"

He streaked up the ladder and toward the pilot house. Wrecked in a broad channel! With fists clenched and eyes blazing he thrust past the wavering cook and the three sailors.

The stricken gray face of John Lane confronted him. The man, hands clutching the wheel, was trembling but the ship was already headed toward a sandbar east of the channel.

"I was going to beach her," Lane said tautly. He stepped to one side of the wheel.

Silently Dan grabbed the spokes. He set the starboard engine telegraph to dead slow and turned her into the wind to kill her speed, measuring the distance to the sandbar.

He beckoned to a sailor. "Miguel, go to the engine room. Ask the chief how high the water is getting."

The man ran. Dan's eyes swept the channel. A black can buoy near at hand marked a sharp turn.

"What happened?" Dan asked, savage eyes turning to Lane. "Did you cut that can?"

Lane hesitated, moving his lips.

"I would swear I left it to port," he said. "I— You won't believe me."

He dropped suddenly onto the helmsman's stool as if his backbone had turned

to water. "I don't believe myself," he said hoarsely. "I—I don't believe—"

Plainly the smart thing to do was to bounce this guy onto the beach fast and fight on from there, with a united, unjittery crew. On the other hand, Lane was in her crew and he, Dan Carpenter, was her master.

"Let's have a look at that chart!" Dan said. "Bear a hand, will you?"

John Lane's teeth were gritting. He grabbed the chart, folded it over and with a trembling finger indicated their location. The can's station was off a reaching coral reef invisible in the roiled water of the bay.

Miguel stuck his head in, teeth agleam in his twisted mouth. "Chief say water—" His hand, palm down, lifted quickly. "He rig another pump."

Shakily Lane pointed toward the head of the harbor.

"Cap'n Colmar's coming."

"Why not?" Dan muttered sardonically. "He's still got five thousand bucks in this busted hull and he knows I figured on insuring her after I got my first freight."

Miguel waved an arm toward a sizable steamer anchored nearer the town in the only spot of deep water shown on the chart. She was lowering a lifeboat.

"This isn't a marine disaster," Dan growled. "It's only a bankruptcy." His eyes probed again at John Lane.

"I can only say I'm sorry." Lane's voice was desperate. "You're thinking I wrecked her out of spite—or envy—but—"

"We'll hold the inquest later," Dan said. Why didn't he suspect Lane of treachery? A master should know his men as well as he knew his ship. What else but treachery could you call this?"

"Go below and estimate the damage," Dan said. "I won't beach her unless—"

"There's a marine railway in San Ybel that'll take her."

"I don't doubt it'll take her," Dan said, thinking of the two hundred left in the strongbox in the tiny chartroom. "Get the report."

Miguel's soft brown eyes stared curiously at Lane's departing back. "She is not lucky, thees ship *Capitan,*" he said. "Not for Señor Lane. No?"

His curiosity switched to Carpenter.

"Get the anchor clear to let go," Dan commanded harshly. "Move!"

The motor lifeboat from the freighter *Horace C. Brown* closed up. A lean ramrod of a man in her sternsheets—Cap'n Slocum, he called himself—proffered a rather contemptuous offer of help.

Dan declined. He looked toward the buoy. "Any other ship come in today?" he asked.

Captain Slocum's eyes followed his. "No. I arrived yesterday and that vessel—" his eyes indicated Colmar's *Belle Kate*— "came in during the night. The buoy's not adrift, Captain. Did you leave it to port?"

The contempt was plain, now, in the nasal voice. Red-faced, Dan did not answer.

"You'd better beach her or head for the yard, captain," Slocum said tartly, as he swung his tiller. "A ship on the bottom's expensive."

Dan kept her on the edge of the channel as he waited for Lane's report. Was there a chance he could beach and careen her and make satisfactory repairs with his own dispirited men?

LANE came back, wet, dirty and taut-lipped. She was holed forward and amidships; the port tailshaft had cracked and done serious damage to the Diesel. The two pumps were about holding the water.

Dan scowled at the black can. "Think back, Lane!" he said. "Exactly what happened?"

"I'd—I'd say I left it to port," Lane said. His hollow voice was not convincing or even convinced. Why didn't he lie better than that, if he'd cut it? There was a catch here.

"Just for laughs I'm going to take soundings around that marker," Dan said. "Miguel! You and Tonio get the boat over."

Colmar's *Belle Kate,* twice the little *Islander's* tonnage, ranged alongside her.

Colmar, squat, black-haired, stood at the rail, waiting his chance, and swung his short body surely across a three-foot gap down onto Dan's deck. The two craft diverged. Colmar's keen gray eyes drove John Lane out of the pilothouse. He asked calm, unhurried questions.

"I was just figuring on dropping a sounding line around that buoy," Dan said, shamefaced in spite of himself.

"Was he at the wheel?" Captain Colmar asked with a twitch of an eye toward Lane.

Dan nodded.

"That explains it, son," Colmar said. He hesitated. "I was watching through my glasses. Didn't you keep an eye on him?"

"He cut the buoy?"

Colmar nodded quickly. "I told you he wasn't reliable," he reminded Dan calmly. "That's why I finally had to take over his ship. All I said to you in his favor was that he did know the islands, the shipping agents, the business—"

"Reliable or not," Dan said slowly, "he's got a master's ticket and it becomes ingrained in a man—"

"Right!" said Captain Colmar. His voice remained even. "There's no use hunting excuses for Lane. We masters must be hard men about the safety of our ships. Lane smacked that reef because I sold you his ship. Some men's minds work like that."

Dan grunted. "How men's minds work is always news to me."

"Let's be charitable and say he's haywire," Colmar said almost indifferently. "Get rid of him, son."

"When I'm sure," said Dan slowly. He pointed at the buoy. "You wouldn't check the water?"

"You're a shipmaster now," Colmar said. "The story of how you hit a rock and then tried to blame it on a government marker would follow you all over the islands—make you a figure of fun."

Dan nodded.

Over on the *Belle Kate* chain rattled through a hawsepipe and the ship's anchor plunged into the shoal water in the shelter of the reef.

"I'll lie here tonight," Colmar explained in response to Dan's surprise. "I'm set to leave at ten in the morning to grab a juicy five trip charter if I get another radio from Miami. Why aren't you heading for the yard. Broke?"

"I was making up my mind," Dan said slowly.

"You're wasting time," Colmar said calmly. He tapped his toe on the dead deck. "She's logy already."

"I had some notion of beaching her—"

Captain Colmar shook his head. "I've got to remind you that amateur fumbling won't mend this ship. That's what a shipyard's for. The one here is reliable."

"I understand you own a piece of it," Dan said, and watched him with some intensity.

Colmar frowned very slightly. "Beside the point," he said. "This ship is my security for the five thousand you owe me. I have a natural interest."

His voice became casual. "If you want to hand her over I'll take a look below and see if I can allow you anything on what's left of her."

"Allow me—"

Colmar's eyes opened widely; a slight smile twisted his lips.

"You don't think a craft like this, barely able to stay above water, is worth much more than five thousand dollars, do you?"

"I paid you—"

"Before she was wrecked."

Dan Carpenter shook his head. "You think too fast for me, captain," he said. "I'll need time to catch up. And I've also to talk to my engineer—"

"I'm in the way," Captain Colmar said. He smiled encouragingly and laid a hand briefly on Dan's shoulder. "Son, you're taking this like a soldier—"

"I'm trying to take it like a sailor," Dan said.

"Get her to the yard," Colmar advised. "Buy yourself a drink and sleep on it. Now, if you'll call a hand to row me to my ship—"

Further aft Cliff Bronson stuck his head up above the engineroom companion to stare at the departing visitor. His nose was still swelling from his recent dive and he fussed at it with a greasy hand. Finally he emerged all the way and came along to the pilothouse. He glanced at his watch and at the flaming red sunset.

"Don't pull the brass knucks on me, skipper," he said gloomily. "I'm not saying I told you so. Right now we're holding the leaks but if one o' those pumps sneezes—"

"Keep 'em turning," Dan said. He watched Captain Colmar board his anchored vessel with smooth ease. He was met on deck by his engineer, a massive man in dungaree pants, a full head taller

than Colmar. They disappeared together into the narrow wheelhouse. Dan reached for the almanac. He looked up the moon with Cliff watching suspiciously.

"Rises at nine minutes past midnight," Dan said to the inquisitive engineer.

Cliff Bronson muttered peevishly. His eyes slid forward, to where John Lane was sitting on a hatch, hunched over, watching his twisting fingers.

"That guy is cracking up," Cliff said. "Bad as this smells I'd say it was just more tough luck. But Lane's stood his last watch or the board of inquiry is nuts."

"The board isn't going to like me either," Dan said, "unless I make myself some luck."

"Huh?"

"You heard me right," Dan said.

"A floating nuthouse—and not so very high it ain't floating, neither," Cliff Bronson said in disgust and stamped aft.

WHILE the sunset blazed more fiercely John Lane went overside with a rope around his middle. After lung-tearing underwater efforts he tacked a square of canvas smeared thick with white lead over the forward hole.

Dan had not objected to the project and he watched dispassionately. There was nothing phony about Lane's efforts; he wanted to stop that leak. The job eased the labor of the pumps only slightly but it helped Dan make up his mind. While doubt remained in his mind he couldn't chuck any man of his crew onto the beach.

Across on the anchored *Belle Kate* Captain Colmar, from behind watchful binoculars, roared hearty approval of Lane's attempt. Too hearty.

The doctor's belated boat came out, gave the *Islander* pratique and accepted a carton of cigarettes.

While the sunset's flames were dulling to tropic night Dan made two tentative passes at the sandbank south of Colmar's ship. Each time he reversed his single motor and drew away just before the *Islander's* bow took the sloping sand. These hesitations won no comment from Captain Colmar or his burly engineer. As darkness closed in around the leaking *Islander* the uneasiness of Dan's three sailors and the cook was rising almost to the verge of mutiny. They wanted action —to beach her or run her to the shipyard —to do something. Lane stood by in silence; Cliff Bronson's cracks were getting sharper. Nobody understood that the San Ybel shipyard meant finish without a fight.

In the pilothouse Dan inspected the blackness of the night. Thick enough. He turned the wheel and headed the *Islander* toward the channel; then called John Lane to the helm.

"I'm going over in the rowboat to see Captain Colmar, John," he said. "Take her in to a berth off the pier."

Lane drew an audible breath. "You want me—"

"That's right," said Dan. "She's yours till I get back."

"Cliff Bronson's been talking a lot about my bad luck, skipper," Lane said. His voice was strained. "He's letting me down easy. It's not just bad luck; it can't be! It's—incompetence. I've quit trying to find some other answer. Don't trust me with your ship."

"Incompetence?" Dan said. "Captain Colmar says different."

"That I meant to wreck her?"

"That's what he said." Dan waited hopefully.

"Captain Colmar lies!" John Lane blazed with some real spunk.

"O.K.!" Dan said briskly. "Leave it to me. I'm your Old Man. Now take her in. Stand watch-and-watch with Cliff. If anything happens use your own judgment. Throttle her down while I get clear in the boat."

He glanced into the tiny chartroom. He had a .38 calibre revolver in his strongbox. But what he was up against was too smooth for a gun.

He stepped out of the wheelhouse and walked aft.

"We've got a chance," he told himself. For once Cliff Bronson was below with a valve-handle in his fingers. Dan did not disturb him.

He pulled the rowboat towing astern in alongside her quarter and dropped into it. The *Islander* slogged past him toward the distant lights of town.

Quietly Dan rowed up-current from the lights of the *Belle Kate*. A hundred

yards away he lowered the grapnel and anchored the boat. He shed his shirt, pants and shoes and slid overside into black water as warm as fresh milk and silky smooth to his skin.

A school of mullet was splashing around on the surface, fleeing from something bigger. Dan grunted softly and swam faster down-current toward the bow of the *Belle Kate.*

There was no trick about boarding Captain Colmar's ship. Her anchor chain was ready to his reaching hands and he swarmed up silently onto her bow. Close to him the vague form of a flat, motionless man showed on her forward hatch. A light burned in her wheelhouse and somebody was on the bridge, probably watching the departure of the *Islander.* Dan lay still on deck till he had finished dripping and the man on the bridge had left. Then he made his way rapidly aft and up the ladder.

He pulled aside the cover of the port lifeboat and slipped into the musty smelling boat.

Ready to duck, he glanced across the harbor at the tart Yankee's freighter, a quarter mile distant, and at smaller craft farther away in the quiet waters. Then he settled down to waiting.

The tinny chime of the wheelhouse clock beat out the bells of the slow passing first night watch. Dan writhed on the lifeboat bottom as discomfort became pain and then torture. But at last midnight was coming up—and with midnight would come the moon.

Lights ashore were scattered now and only the riding lights showed on the ships. The *Belle Kate* remained dishearteningly silent.

Dan stiffened suddenly. Maybe he wasn't so nutty.

At this time of night when the *Belle Kate's* hands should have been sleeping most soundly the ship began to come to quiet life. Men muttered on the maindeck. The davit falls suspending a small boat at the ship's stern creaked and the boat took the water.

Dan saw it creep away.

Below, the *Belle Kate's* main Diesel began to hum. A hand entered the wheelhouse and switched off the overhead light. Footsteps sounded on the bridge and then Captain Colmar's voice gave a guarded order.

Dan, crouching in the lifeboat, followed by ear as the anchor chain came in and she got under sluggish way. All lights, even her riding lights, had been doused. Dan groped in the boat's locker until he found among her gear the metal case containing a dozen red lights. He held it in his hands, waiting.

The ship moved only a short distance; then lay with no way on. Colmar left the bridge and walked to the focus of activity aft. Low voices rumbled in her stern and a chain clinked repeatedly.

The man in the wheelhouse came out and hung over the rail.

Dan slid out of the lifeboat with his metal box and drifted aft until he could make out the blurred movement of bodies. His face hardened.

A man came hurrying forward and Dan flattened out on deck along the edge of a hatch.

By his squat figure and faintly discerned silhouette the moving man was Colmar. He was bound for the bridge. Dan trailed as far as the lifeboat.

Colmar gave an order to the wheelhouse. The *Belle Kate* surged slowly ahead. Abandoning stealth Dan darted aft. He ignited red flares fast and stuck them along the rail.

A red glow began breaking out along the ship's deck.

Captain Colmar swore and his feet clattered on the bridge ladder. He raced aft, kicking at the flares, calling in restrained fury to his milling men. The lights were glowing in fierce red brilliance now, making the *Belle Kate* a ship of hell. Dan ran to the bridge and flung overside a life-ring with its attached water light. The light plopped into a dazzling white glare.

DAN climbed the ladder to the wheelhouse top. He flung back his head and let go a series of yelps as commanding in the quiet night as the whoop of a destroyer's siren. They were hardly needed. The lights had wakened the sleeping harbor of San Ybel.

Colmar's voice was roaring orders dead aft.

Dan jerked off the searchlight cover, switched on the light and swivelled it aft. Its brilliant white shaft pierced the red ferocity of the remaining flares.

The *Belle Kate's* stern and the waters around it were as bright as a red day. Vividly there was revealed the black can buoy, just astern of the ship. A wire hawser from the *Belle Kate's* capstan was shackled to the buoy's mooring chain and the *Belle Kate,* still under way, was towing the buoy and its heavy anchor through the water toward the channel.

"Cast it loose! Leggo that hawser!" Colmar cried and his voice was gaining volume, losing control. "Full astern! Douse those lights! Overside with 'em! Move, you blasted fools!"

The scene was like a well-lighted stage setting. And with every second more spectators on ships and shore would be watching the sea sacrilege that was taking place, a ship at black midnight dragging a sacred government marker.

Nobody within a mile could miss that action. Dan looked toward the big freighter and saw flashlights were already glinting beside one of her lifeboats.

The man at the wheel of the *Belle Kate* completed the disaster. He signalled to reverse the engine, then froze on the telegraph while the *Belle Kate* began churning backward toward the black buoy. The wire cable went slack and twisted in the water.

As Colmar and his hands threw the wire off the capstan, whirling propeller blades twisted the wire strands of the hawser around the propeller shaft. Colmar was roaring. But the ship was inexorably secured to the black can buoy.

Her fouled shaft ground to a stop.

The frantic Colmar gave up his efforts aft. His squat body came charging up the path of the flashlight's glare with a massive shackle gripped in his hand. Every trace of his habitual smoothness was gone. With no reluctance Dan moved to the head of the ladder.

"Come on!" Colmar cried. "Get this man!"

A new light suddenly flooded the *Belle Kate's* deck. It was a ship's searchlight, from a black ship close at hand. Her siren let go a harsh scream of warning at Colmar.

Dan recognized the screech.

This was the *Islander* coming down on them without lights.

Dan knew why. During the long watch John Lane must have worked out what might be up.

He was risking his luck in the dark harbor to back his skipper.

The *Islander's* light did not slow Colmar's charge. He was past caring about witnesses. But across Colmar's bright path a man's leg suddenly stuck out. The squat shipmaster tripped and crashed to the deck.

A big man dropped on him and pinned him to the deck. Somebody did not favor murder in public.

"Who's that?" Dan called down.

The *Belle Kate's* giant engineer planted a knee in the small of Colmar's back and squinted into the light.

"Green, sir," he said most unctuously. "Are you Cap'n Carpenter of the *Islander?* I've just figgered what this snake was up to!"

"No!" said Dan.

"My own skipper, too! Likely this is mutiny, but I ain't standing for this rough stuff with gove'nment markers."

Sudden virtue! Dan's lifted hand conceded a grin. "You didn't know?"

"I didn't realize, sir," Green said smoothly. He jammed Colmar's skull against the deck as the captain lifted his head. "Last night, sir, I fell for Colmar's story that he was shifting that marker secretly because a friend o' his commanding the Coast Guard buoy tender had placed it wrong and was going to be in a terrible jam."

Green shook his head slowly and sorrowfully.

"I believed him!" he announced indignantly.

Colmar's own smooth line was recurving on him now.

"Even when he said he'd shifted the buoy a bit too far out o' the channel by mistake so the *Islander* hit the reef I believed it was just accidental," the righteous engineer said. "That's why I helped tonight to get it back. But I see it all now! He did it on purpose, like he did John Lane dirt to get his ship off him."

(Continued on page 125)

THE REUNION

By E. H. TOUSSAINT

ACHTUNG! Smartly the line of men and dogs came to attention at the Oberleutnant's command, so that each man stood with hands stiffly at his sides, eyes straight front, motionless; and beside each man, ten inches to his left, head on exact line with the man's left knee, stood a dog equally motionless, equally disciplined.

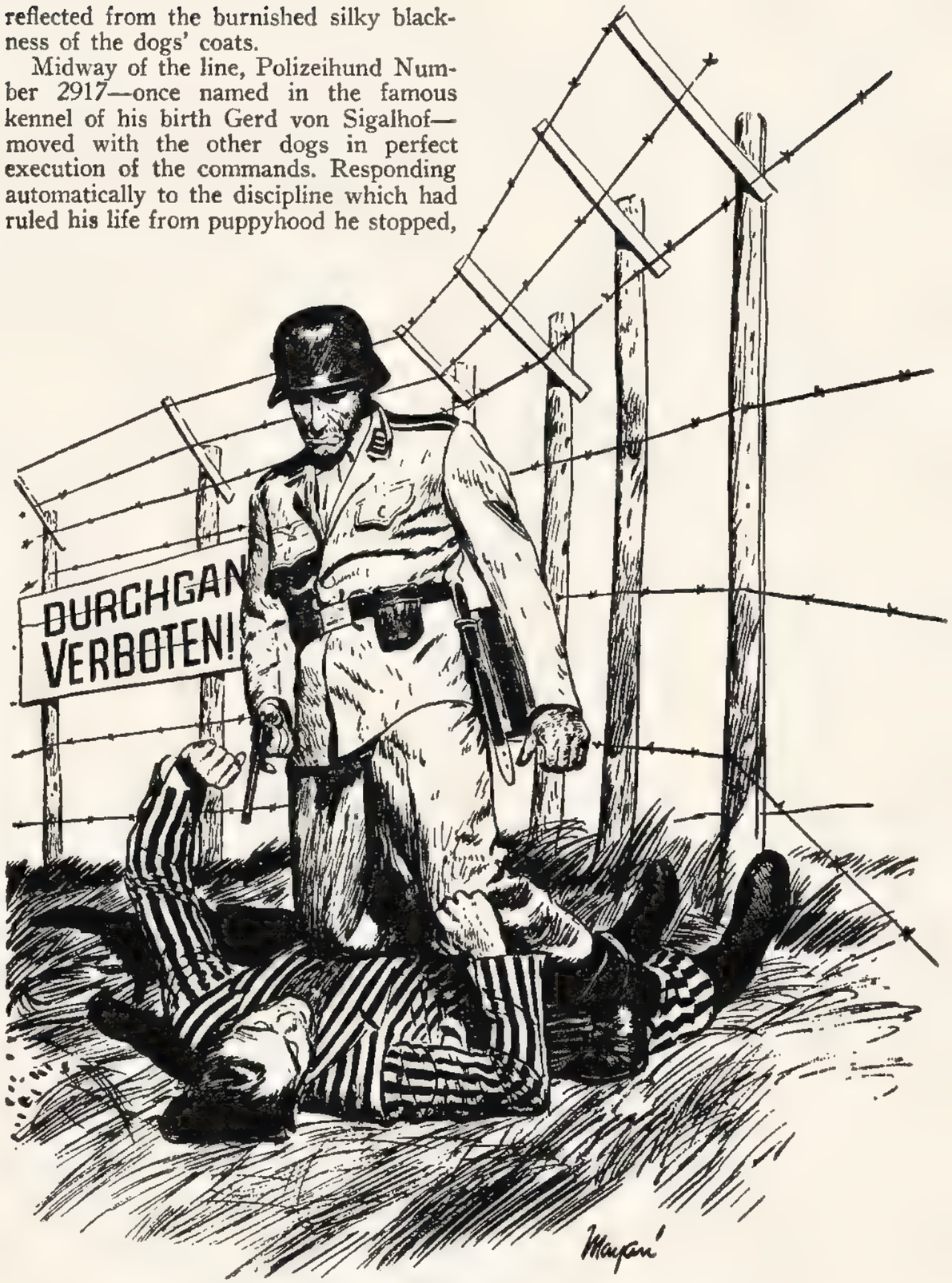
The Oberleutnant strode briskly along the line inspecting each man and animal for every detail of equipment and appearance. When he had finished, he again took his position on the right, and at his successively barked commands the solid line moved forward a few paces, faced right to form a single marching file of men with a single marching file of dogs beside it, then broke into groups of eights and continued rapidly, precisely, through the intricate movements of the drill.

An imposing sight this—one which, under other circumstances, would have been thrilling. The lines of uniformed men, marching, deploying in perfect unison; and beside them the dogs, as alike in appearance as their uniformed masters and as expertly disciplined. Doberman Pinschers; powerful black animals with markings of rust on jowls and lower legs; cropped ears standing straight from the wedge-shaped heads; spring steel muscles moving with an effortless fluidity which made their bodies seem almost to float rather than to impose weight upon the legs and the high-arched rounded paws. Approximately seventy pounds each of fiery courage and lethal striking power to be held in leash or exploded into action at the word of command.

The sunlight set up bright points on the arms and equipment of the men and reflected from the burnished silky blackness of the dogs' coats.

Midway of the line, Polizeihund Number 2917—once named in the famous kennel of his birth Gerd von Sigalhof—moved with the other dogs in perfect execution of the commands. Responding automatically to the discipline which had ruled his life from puppyhood he stopped,

ILLUSTRATED BY EARL EUGENE MAYAN



Steinert was on his back, with the guard kneeling on his chest and slowly drawing his pistol for the finishing shot.

turned, sat, arose, ran or walked in faultless obedience. Outwardly he was the perfect product of his training, but deep within him, where the feelings, the senses, the soul of him still dwelt, he was troubled and uneasy.

To his human masters, the bright air carried only the usual odors from the wire enclosure of the concentration camp which they guarded—foul odors at which they sometimes cursed but for which they and others like them were responsible. But the sensitive nostrils of the Doberman, capable of separating and analyzing odors as the eye of the artist can separate and analyze colors, were filled with a scent which set him quivering with nostalgic loneliness, with anxiety and with frustrated affection. Somewhere close by was Steinert, the man to whom he had long ago given the deep and lasting affection of which the Doberman's fiery soul is capable; the one human being to whom he gave obedience gladly and not merely because discipline demanded it.

The intricate movements of the drill took the company of guards up and down before the wire where the prisoners stood or moved listlessly about. In fact, the purpose of holding the drill here was to impress those prisoners with the power and efficiency of their human and canine guards so that they might see how hopeless would be any attempt at escape by day or by night from this living hell in which they dwelt.

Walk, run, sit, lie down. They were nearing the wire now, and the scent poured in like a hot draught. Soon Steinert would speak; soon the beloved hand would run with a firm pressure over the sleek head, would flatten the pointed ears for a moment and then pass on down the arched neck to finish with a sharp smack on the hard-muscled shoulder. Then all the great dog's world would be right again. The long period of lonely waiting would have ended. But the Oberleutnant barked another command; they turned from the wire, formed their long line and marched off in the direction of the barracks. Steinert had not come forward. Steinert had not spoken. The loneliness descended again. The waiting, the pitiful timeless waiting of a dog for his master, continued.

INSIDE the wire, men, or what had once been men, sat or stood or moved listlessly about, pale, emaciated, their faces drawn to the thinness of caricatures, their bodies shrunken by starvation so that their clothing hung ludicrously about them. Of all ages and social strata, they were now alike in their raggedness, their filth, and the air of utter hopelessness which bore them down—all except one who, despite his thinness and his rags, had about him an air of self-respect, of competence which was recognized by prisoners and guards alike. He was as starved as the others, as ragged. His clothes hung about him like the cast-off garments on an effigy, but in some way or other he had managed to keep aloof from filth and to keep his mind from despair, so that the unconquerable spirit shone through and marked him as one apart. A fighting man this, much of his strength now gone, but with the fighting soul still hot and strong within him. For Steinert had always been a fighting man, and if he died here, as he probably was destined to do, he would die a fighting man. They could starve him—and they had. They could beat him—his body bore scars both old and new. But when at last they killed him they would have to stand back from his fists and feet and they would have to hear him cursing them as he died.

Steinert was new to this prison, having been brought here only yesterday from another concentration camp which was being discontinued, and this was the first time he had seen the guards and dogs drilling outside the wire. He knew why they drilled there. He was in sympathy with the growls and muttered curses of his fellow-prisoners as they watched, but he could not help standing straight and bright-eyed with interest when he saw the Dobermans. He could not know, of course, that among these dogs was an old friend. They were too much alike in appearance for him to pick out an individual and identify it at that distance, but he watched and strained his eyes for a glimpse of a tell-tale scar across one of the wedge-shaped skulls. Once he almost thought he saw it but he could not be sure, and when he moved closer to the wire for a better look the sentry warned

him back with an oath. Afterward he realized that probably the momentary sight of a scar had been only the creation of his imagination—the product of his wishful thinking.

This friendship between man and dog was the attachment of those who have been brothers in arms. They had served together in the police force of the old Republic, before murderous maniacs had come to power and made the police the instrument of brutal oppression. Then the police had been truly the guardians of the peace, a body of trained, efficient men, respected by decent citizens and profoundly feared by those who sought to live outside the law. In those days only able men could serve in the police ranks and a man could be proud of the uniform he wore. Steinert had worn that uniform for many years and had contributed perhaps more than his share to the honor in which it was held.

Gerd, the dog, had been selected by the police trainers when he was a six-months-old puppy, purchased from the famous kennels where he had been whelped, and shipped to the police school. There for nearly two years he had undergone the rigorous training which fitted dogs to work with human policemen in every phase of their duties from routine patrols to life and death battles with desperate criminals.

First he had been taught to distrust anyone who came as a stranger without proper introduction. For the first several weeks of his stay at the school he had been kept in an enclosure by himself with frequent visits from one man—always the same man. This man fed him, petted him, played with him. Then one day a stranger entered the enclosure. The dog greeted him with puppy friendliness, only to be rewarded by the terrifying cracking of a whip which the stranger produced from under his coat. Frightened at first, the puppy backed into a corner but finally, in desperation, he showed fight. Immediately the stranger ran out and closed the door after him. Within a few minutes the regular trainer entered the enclosure and petted and fed the dog. The next day another stranger came in, and the performance was repeated. It did not require many repetitions with different men before Gerd learned that the way to avoid the whip-cracking and unpleasantness was to snarl and threaten immediately when any stranger came through the door.

Then one day the regular trainer came in bringing another man with him. Gerd was puzzled and aloof, but his trainer called him and introduced the stranger, repeating over and over the word "friend," and the other man petted the dog and tossed a ball for him. In succeeding days the performance was alternated. Whenever a stranger entered without the trainer he threatened the dog until he was driven from the enclosure. Whenever a stranger was introduced by the trainer he turned out to be a pleasant enough fellow. The Doberman is frequently called "the dog with the human brain." It was only a matter of days until Gerd knew that people not properly introduced were all dangerous and that people who were properly introduced were all pleasant folk.

Then there was the little matter of accepting food. A piece of meat found on

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the floor of the enclosure and gulped with puppy hunger turned out to be loaded with red pepper which set his mouth and throat on fire and made his eyes stream. A morsel accepted from even a properly introduced stranger without the trainer's permission was similarly loaded—always. But if it came from the hand of the trainer or was given to him by someone else with the trainer's permission it was good—always. So he learned not to pick up food or to accept food except from proper source or with proper authorization.

This was only the beginning. These were the simplest things. And afterward came long weeks and months of intensive training as he progressed through the program carefully laid out and skillfully followed by men whose profession was training and who were aware of the all-important fact that a dog, deprived of the power of speech and of the ability to fully understand speech, can learn only by his own experiences; that the same reward and the same penalty must follow the same act without one single variation or reversal.

WHEN, after nearly two years, he was "graduated" from the school, he could do an amazing variety of things. He could pick out from a pile of miscellaneous objects the one or two or three which had been handled or sworn by a single individual whose scent he had been given. He could locate in a group of twenty or thirty people the one individual whose scent had been given to him on a garment worn. He could leap at a ten-foot-high wall, catch his forelegs over the top and drag his body up and over and leap down on the other side. He knew how to bore in on a man with a blazing pistol, zigzagging at lightning speed so that he made an almost unhittable target until he was close enough to spring and seize the man's forearm in a crushing grip which opened his fingers and sent his gun clattering to the ground. He would, on command, knock a man to the ground and hold him pinned there, unharmed; but, also at command, he was quite capable of tearing the man's throat out. He responded instantly—almost automatically—to every word of command without regard to any instinct or feeling or desire of his own. Affection for any individual was a feeling completely unknown to him. He gave perfect obedience to whatever individual had been placed in charge of him. He ignored all others, with the Doberman's blank, straight-ahead stare.

He was, in short, the perfect product of the police school, a machine, a potential bolt of lethal lightning, wholly and entirely subject to the will and the command of man.

He had been assigned then to patrol duty at night with a police officer in the tough waterfront section of a port city. It was an area of wharves and warehouses, not frequented by the usual waterfront riff-raff, who found nothing there to attract them, but the valuable contents of the warehouses offered a rich return for boldly executed thievery—and the maze of alleys and narrow dark streets provided tempting cover for those who would attempt such forays. Through the long hours of each night the man and dog moved through the threatening darkness, alone except for each other, alert and strong and unafraid—the Law.

The police officer's name was Steinert. Four years they served together there, and in those years they earned three citations of special merit for gallant and successful action against superior numbers of men ready and desperately willing to kill rather than be taken in the act of robbery. In and on their bodies too they carried certain permanent mementoes of those days: a bullet which the surgeon decided not to remove from Steinert's body, and the scars of two vicious knife thrusts; a scar made by a creasing bullet along the top of the dog's wedge-shaped skull and another made by the ripping thrust of a heavy knife in his breast. But the man who had fired those bullets and the men who had made the knife thrusts had been brought in by the policeman and the dog, weak from loss of blood but still on their feet and in control of the situation.

Something else had occurred too in those years, for life had not been all fighting and danger through the long hours of those nights. There had been time for the feeding of tidbits, for the teaching of special tricks; even, occasionally, for the tossing and catching of a ball

on the broad expanse of a moonlit wharf. At midnight, when they had a half hour rest period, they would sit looking out over the restless harbor water side by side, and often the man's powerful arm would lie about the hard-muscled neck and shoulders of the dog and he would talk quietly to him. So had grown the bond between these two—rooted deeply in the lonely soul of the fighting man and in the heart of Gerd von Sigalhof, deprived in his puppyhood of the Doberman's birthright of undying love for a single human being.

It was early in their fifth year of service together that the trouble began for them. One night Steinert was kept off his patrol for several hours while another man took his place. When he returned, just before midnight, he was taut with anger. Gerd sensed it, for the relation of the Doberman to the one chosen master is close, and what the man feels the dog feels with him.

Then, two nights later, an Inspector of Police intercepted them when they were partly through their second patrol. Another policeman was with him. The inspector acknowledged Steinert's salute and spoke curtly—a command. When this was not obeyed he spoke again, his tone more peremptory. Steinert said no word; made no move; only stood stock-still and looked with hard eyes at the inspector while the muscles stood out in ridges along his clenched jaw. And through that mysterious bond which links dog and master Gerd sensed his feeling and shared it, so that a matching fire of rage kindled and burned within him, so that the hair on his back and on the top of his powerful neck rose and stood like a mane while a snarl gathered deep in his throat. The inspector was nothing to him. A man who was Steinert's enemy was his enemy also, to be attacked if permitted and killed if the master so commanded.

Then the tension was broken. Steinert's lips moved in a restraining command so that the dog lay down at his side. Moving slowly, as if his fingers were numbed, Steinert unfastened the short leash which hung unused at his belt, snapped one end in the ring on the dog's collar, and handed the other end to the policeman who stood beside the inspector. It was the ceremony of turning over command. It meant that the dog was now to obey the commands of the man to whom the leash had been delivered.

That had been the end of it except that, just before Steinert went away with the inspector he had turned back and, stooping, had run his hand over the dog's skull, momentarily flattening the sharp ears, then down along the neck to the hard muscles of the shoulder. It was his usual gesture of caress, but tonight Steinert pressed his hand hard as if to put into it the full power of some strong emotion. Then he went away, walking beside the inspector.

That was the last time Gerd had seen his master.

It had been the end of service and the end of liberty for Steinert. A basic part of the Nazi strategy had been to remove men like him from the police force and to replace them with gangsters who could be depended upon to carry out any orders without question and without regard to law or human decency.

Each man's records were examined thoroughly for material on which to base his expulsion, and Steinert's record was made to order for their purposes. It showed that his mother was of Jewish descent, a quite sufficient cause for his dismissal. Dismissal might for the time being have been all, if he had fawned and crawled, but he didn't. When confronted with the evidence of his "crime" he not only had failed to be apologetic but he had been proud and defiant. It was not his nature to grovel. It was his nature to fight. He had cursed his inquisitors and called them the gutter scum that they were and so, in first one prison and then another, he had earned the reputation of being stubborn, dangerous and hard to handle.

Every move had meant for Steinert a prison where the treatment was more harsh, the conditions more heart-breaking, than the last. Now he had reached bottom —and he knew it. This was the great camp from which men did not emerge alive—or women or children either. Death did not come quickly here. It came only after starvation, beatings, humiliation. Then the gas chamber if one was lucky, or the medical experiment laboratory if one was not.

It was two weeks after the day when Gerd had first caught Steinert's scent before he had any further indication of his nearness. He was one of a detail of guards and dogs waiting at the main prison gate shortly after dawn to take out a work party. They stood back a few paces from the gate, on either side of the dusty road which led into the wire enclosure. A smaller gate, set into the big one, would open at intervals to let out prisoners in groups of three or four. A guard standing just outside the gate would check their numbers and send them on to join others already waiting ankle-deep in the dust of the road. The prisoners answered tonelessly as their numbers were called. They shuffled rather than walked up the road to join the group waiting there.

They would have been ludicrous in their rags if they had not been so pitiful. Gerd, like the other dogs, watched them with mild interest while they moved; paid them no attention after they stopped. He sat on his haunches, alert but at ease—a soldier on routine duty. Then the gate clicked open again and at the same instant the dog's nostrils were filled with a warm scent which brought him sharply to his feet, his body tense and trembling and a little shuddering sound of eagerness gathering in his throat. A man came out alone; a big man who held himself erect; who did not shuffle but walked with a clean stride; who answered the guard in a voice which was not toneless but firm and brisk; a fighting man—Steinert.

At the actual sight of him, at the sound of his voice, Gerd von Sigalhof was almost beside himself; but the iron discipline, the habit of meticulous obedience, held Polizeihund Number 2917 rooted to the spot where he stood, trembling, making that eager shuddering sound in his throat, pleading mutely for recognition but unable to move from his assigned place to seek it. And there was no recognition, neither here nor on the long dragging march out to the farmlands, nor during the long work hours of that day.

With all the Doberman's quick intelligence, with all his ability to learn, he still is a dog, with a good dog's honesty. He has never learned to dissemble nor to recognize dissembling by others. Gerd could not know how Steinert's heart had leaped when, beside the road at the prison gate, he had seen the bullet-furrowed skull, the scar in the knife-ripped breast. He could not know that when, in midmorning, Gerd had pulled a little too hard on the leash and the beefy guard had yanked savagely on his choke collar, Steinert's hands had clenched hard on the rake he was holding as he choked down his wrathful protest at such mistreatment.

Steinert had heard that shuddering sound in the dog's throat; had seen the trembling of his body; and he had interpreted correctly. He knew that if he gave but the slightest sign the animal would come bounding to him—and would be promptly shot by the guards. And so he had done that most difficult of all difficult things: he had, after all these years, refused to give a sign of friendship to a beloved comrade who was pleading for it with an eloquence far more potent than that of any human word or gesture.

It was shortly after noon when the trouble occurred. Working next to Steinert, piling hay as Steinert raked, was an old man, a Jew with the serene eyes of a rabbi—which he was. All day he had worked steadily and without a murmur of complaint. Steinert had felt surprise that his slight old frame could put forth so much energy. But now he was weakening. The heat of the August sun, the weakness of under-nourishment, were telling. Several times, when the guard was at the other end of the line of workers, Steinert had helped him pile hay to catch up with the raking, but now he was falling back again and the guard was coming along the line, angrily bellowing at him to work faster.

The old man raised his head at the sound of the guard's voice. For an instant he looked at the guard, steadily, quietly. Then, just as quietly, his knees began to buckle and he slid forward, face down in the stubble. The guard, mouthing curses, came and stood over him. Then he drew back his booted foot for a kick, but it was never delivered. A powerful hand seized his shoulder and swung him half around so that he looked into the hard, lean face and furious eyes of Steinert only a few inches from his own. "Don't touch him, gutter rat," Steinert rasped—and knew that he was signing his own death war-

rant. The Nazi was indeed what Steinert had called him—a rat. Furious though he was, and armed against a weaponless man, he took the precaution to glance around quickly for help and, seeing no other guard close by, he merely growled a threat and walked away. Face to face encounters with angry men were not in his line. He wanted superior numbers; an excuse to shoot from behind. But he would wait, and not forget. Steinert knew the type. It would come before this day was over and he would not get a chance to defend himself. He lifted the old man and laid him near one of the haystacks where he would get at least a little protection from the direct sun and where a guard would not be so likely to notice him. Then he went back to work, raking fast and then piling to keep up with the other prisoners. The men on either side helped him as best they could. The guard had not come back.

IT WAS almost sunset before the guards told them to stop work and pile their tools. Then Steinert woke the old man and he got up, rested but embarrassed and apologetic. When another prisoner told him what had happened, he was frightened—not for himself but for Steinert. "My son, they will kill you for this," he said. "Better that you had let him kill me."

Steinert grinned. "Good riddance," he said. "You will yet return to your people and you will be worth something. I am not worth anything any more."

When the line was formed to leave the field two guards stepped up to Steinert and one of them touched him on the arm. "Wait here," he said. "You will be at the rear." The line moved off with its slow shuffling gait and Steinert fell in at the end of it. Behind him were two guards, the one he had threatened and another, holding a dog on leash. Steinert's pulse quickened. It was the beefy guard, and the dog he held was Gerd.

Slowly the line dragged itself along the road, the dust rising to hang waist-high like a gray haze in the evening air. The shuffling of many feet made a soft brushing sound. Behind him Steinert could hear the heavier tread of the guards' boots, and he listened for any change of pace to indicate that one of them was slowing to aim a pistol at his back or coming closer to shoot him at point-blank range.

The road led through a small grove where the trees made an avenue of semi-darkness now that the sun was low. When they were partway through it one of the guards called to Steinert to halt. He obeyed, and turned to face them. The beefy guard, holding the dog, was a few paces away. The other, the one Steinert had threatened, stood a little to one side. The line of prisoners shuffled on. The brushing sound of their feet drew farther and farther away until finally it was lost. A sudden fluttering in the treetops sounded startlingly loud as a belated bird sought its shelter for the night.

At last the beefy guard spoke. "Now, my friend, we are going to give you a little lesson—a lesson to others too, for they will learn it in the morning when they come here to bury you." He stooped quickly and unsnapped the leash from the dog's collar. The other guard drew his pistol from its holster and slipped off the safety. Steinert's voice rose suddenly now in a high-pitched, frightened wail. "Don't. Don't. Don't let the dog kill me. Anything but that. Please." He dropped to his knees in the dust and began dragging himself toward the guard, his hands raised in panic pleading. The guard stood watching him, making no move until Steinert was close, directly in front of him. Then he drew back his heavy boot and kicked savagely at Steinert's face.

This move was what Steinert had expected. It was standard procedure. It was what he had played for. He twisted his body aside so that the boot heel only grazed his arm, and the next instant he had seized the outflung leg with both hands and was lifting it as he came up powerfully from his knees. Caught off balance, the guard was flung backward so heavily that he was momentarily stunned despite the cushioning effect of the soft dust. Steinert spoke the dog's name twice—"Gerd, Gerd!" and gave an order. Then he threw himself on the prostrate guard, not waiting to learn whether his order had been obeyed or whether the dog, confused by his sudden assumption of authority, his memory dimmed by the long years of separation,

had hesitated or refused. He knew that if the dog failed him he had only an instant to live before a bullet would come tearing into his back from the other guard's pistol, but meanwhile he must play this one slim string to the very end with every ounce of desperate strength he could bring to the attack. He seized the thick throat with both hands. His knee slammed down hard to pin the hand which was trying to draw the pistol from its holster.

The man beneath him writhed and strained in his grasp and the blood drummed in Steinert's ears as he strove to keep his hold. Then, behind him, he heard the other guard's voice raised in a sharp order; a quick, startled curse, the terrible deep-throated snarl of the attacking Doberman; the punctuation of two pistol shots; a shrill scream. Beyond that he could hear nothing for the beefy guard was fully recovered now and fighting desperately. With his free hand he clawed and beat to break Steinert's grip on his throat. His thrusting knees dealt hideous punishment, and steadily his other hand worked nearer the holstered pistol.

They fought like animals, the thick dust and blood in their mouths and their eyes. The guard was a powerful man, as big and well-muscled as Steinert had ever been, but not as skillful; stronger than Steinert was now after the years of starvation; motivated by fear as Steinert was by blazing hatred and desperation—and inevitably the starved years began to tell. Steinert felt the weak trembling in his body; felt the strength going out of his hands as they slipped from the sweat-greasy throat.

Steinert was half rolled as the guard twisted free, and then he was on his back with the guard kneeling on his chest and slowly drawing his pistol for the finishing shot. Steinert's sight clouded for an instant from sheer exhaustion. Then, with a last supreme effort of will, he forced it clear to look, open-eyed and defiant, into the dirt-caked, bloody, sweating mask of triumph and hatred which leered above him. And so it was that he saw the sleek black body come through the air in its panther-like spring; saw in a last brief instant of consciousness, the knife-scarred breast and the clipped ears lying flat to the wedge-shaped skull as the white fangs struck home in the trained killer's lethal slash.

IT WAS full star-lit dark when they finished doing those things which must be done before they could leave this place. It was graying dawn when they crossed the first ridge of the mountain range and found a clean little stream coming down through the thick woods at its foot. They drank thirstily of the bright clear water and after Steinert had washed the filth from his hands and face and arms they sat down to rest for a few moments, man and dog side by side, their bodies pressed close.

They still had a long way to go, and there was danger and possible death ahead, but for now they were together and for a moment it seemed like the old nights on patrol, back in that other, ordered world, when they sat thus side by side and looked out over the restless harbor water.

Steinert's arm went out and lay around the powerful shoulders of the dog, and Steinert talked to him, as lonely men will talk to a beloved dog: "Well, old comrade, we still have a way to go, and we may not make it through—but then again we may, for we are two together and whatever comes we shall this time stay together—*nicht wahr?*" His arm drew a little tighter around the muscular shoulders. The flat, scarred head turned quickly then and a pink tongue touched Steinert's face—just once—as if in answer and in thankfulness that the long time of loneliness and waiting was at an end.

The Scarf of O'Shane

By THOMAS GILCHRIST

Suddenly, O'Shane's heart turned over and he slammed the port shut with a muttered curse.

IN THE hands of O'Shane, the scarf had strangled a native to death in Madagascar. And now, used as a cummerbund, it served the prosaic purpose of holding up his white pants. To O'Shane it was much more than a belt, of course. Being associated with the strongest deed of his life, it was also a symbol of his prowess, and he was wont to straighten his narrow shoulders and fill out his chest whenever his fingers should happen to touch it.

Mr. O'Shane, first officer of the *Salawar*, had never been quite the same since he had acquired that scarf. He was not a strong man. He was, in fact, a very weak

ILLUSTRATED BY ROGER L. THOMAS

man, not so much physically as in other ways. His eyes were small, pale blue and shifty. The heavy and untidy yellow mustache from beneath which he constantly sprayed tobacco juice failed to hide the meanness of his mouth. His voice was nasal and uncertain, often petulant. He frequently forgot to wash and his hair seldom knew a comb.

Being the negative sort of man he was, he was naturally immensely proud of the Madagascar affair; and, anyway, it was a fine scarf, as he often pointed out: heavy silk, a cloth of native fabrication, gorgeously streaked with yellow and black and with strange glints of green when the light caught it just right. It was as beautiful as a cobra.

It had belonged to the native girl, and Mr. O'Shane had one or two other souvenirs of that night: a glittering stone with thin screw-wire that had pierced her left nostrils; a little anklet of shark's teeth; a heavy gold bangle and some other trinkets he had found in the leaf built hut. All were mementos of (to him) the magnificent force of Mr. O'Shane. He did not trouble to remember that in the province of Majunga and under French rule the natives were generally docile on pain of death.

The other mementos he kept in a drawer, whence he would refer to them in secret moments. But he always wore the scarf about his waist. It excited comment and gave him the opportunity of telling his story from time to time. At first he had been very careful not to wrinkle the scarf. He had wound it tenderly about his waist and clipped the end with a large safety pin. But gradually the thing had stretched, though without losing any of its beauty, and he had acquired a certain nonchalance and now he merely fastened it with a big knot . . .

O'SHANE had gone ashore that night even more bent on evil than was his wont. Perhaps the climate had something to do with it; perhaps it was too much gin and vermouth. Certainly, liberal drinks of the local firewater after dinner had set his blood on fire. And then there were his usual appetites, the hot, whispering night, the big stars, the reckless sense of being in a country where the white man was king and the natives flinched when one went by. Whatever it was, O'Shane had left the white settlement to its club, its billiards, its bar and its gossip and lurched along the jungle path to where the leaf-and-cane huts of the native village sat and sweated in the clearing, the scents of the jungle about them and the low, sustained droning of insect life making the steamy darkness pulse. And he had found the hut he wanted.

He had seen her that afternoon. She was coming up from the river. There was a basket on her head, a basketful of red and green fabrics she had evidently been washing. Head erect on the smooth column of her neck, her carriage was magnificent, her long legs, her rippling thighs carried her along with a sensuous grace that O'Shane had never seen. Her breasts were erect, too, and when she turned he saw that every little muscle in her smooth back was alive. Her arms, one of which was decorated with bangles that shone in the sunlight, were softly molded. She was a goddess in ebony; a Comoran Islander, O'Shane would have said.

She had not seen the white man watching her, and O'Shane knew better than to startle her. He remained concealed, sweating behind the tetai tree, and noted the hut she entered.

Secretly, O'Shane broke into cold perspiration when he thought of the native who had unexpectedly entered the dark hut that night. He could still hear the hoarse cry and the swish of a knife drawn from within a lava-lava; and the cries of the woman. Desperately, he had leapt to his feet, groped in the dark for a weapon. And as the woman cried out, the native had dropped down to her side, and with scarcely any conscious volition O'Shane had kicked out with his heavy boot. It was then he became aware of the scarf in his hands, the scarf his groping fingers had found, and in sheer panic he pounced and drew it tight about the man's neck.

His version of the story was different, of course. Self-defense: A native gone berserk as he passed through the village; his woman dragging the body into a hut. Why, the woman was probably nuts, too. She had laid a curse upon him!

O'Shane would chuckle when he told of the native curse. He would chuckle when he told the story out on deck and in daylight, or when he told it to new shipmates in the saloon; or in the barrooms of the Orient with a bottle of whiskey before him. But alone in his room, or in the immense silence of the night-watch, he would remember her crouched there in the corner of the hut beside the body of her man, scarcely more than the whites of her eyes visible, her teeth flashing as her mouth formed words, slowly, coldly and with terrible intensity; and the dirge that the insects played outside in the jungle.

It was then that O'Shane would find himself flicking the sweat from his brow with a trembling hand; and, if he were on the bridge, looking from the cover of darkness at the native helmsman whose eyes glittered, whose face appeared to float without a body, in the light from the binnacle. And he would go over and quiz him and check his origin again, for O'Shane had made sure that never since had a Comoran Islander joined the crew.

THAT had all been a year ago, and since then O'Shane had enjoyed the reputation that his scarf kept alive, for he had not been backward in telling his story of the night's adventure. Particularly, he liked to tell of the curse the woman had set upon him.

"Setting snakes after me," he would chuckle. "Can ye fancy that? 'The snake will come, white man,' she says, or something. Snakes? It's the queer ideas those natives have."

There was a touch of bravado in this. The morning after the Madagascar affair, when the *Salawar* was at sea, Mr. O'Shane had recounted the story to Mr. Watson, the chief engineer, and Mr. Watson had shaken his head.

"I don't know," he had said. "I don't know, Mr. O'Shane. Those natives have queer ideas, all right, but I wouldn't laugh if I were you. I knew a feller once in Haiti who got a native sore at him and the native set spiders on him. Yes, spiders! An' I'm blamed if he didn't find 'em all over the place after that. He'd always run into two or three in his bunk when he went to turn in, an' he'd have to shake 'em out of his shoes in the mornin'. That's a fact! Out of his shoes. They'd get into his tobacco somehow, and into his water and into his clothes. I don't know how. I'm just telling you. Spiders, all sorts an' shapes of spiders. Big fellers an' little fellers. The man went crazy at last . . . just blew up an' jumped overside. We found a whoppin' big tarantula sittin' on his desk afterwards."

"You don't mean to tell me there's anything in those native curses?" demanded O'Shane uneasily.

"I don't mean to tell you nothin'," said the chief engineer.

"But what in hell did she mean by settin' snakes on me?" O'Shane inquired.

The chief engineer was a morbid man. "Well," he said with relish, "I do hear some o' those natives worship a sort o' snake. Kinda devil-god, you know. They tell me that when they want to get even with you they just wish the snake on you."

"Sure it's a lot o' rot, it is. Bloody rot!" said Mr. O'Shane emphatically.

"Maybe," agreed the Chief. "But I'm just sayin' I wouldn't laugh—yet."

But Mr. O'Shane did laugh and he continued to tell his story. But each time he told it there seemed to be something inside him that made the whole thing sound wrong. Long-forgotten Irish tales of banshees at dark window panes came back to him and they began to take on at least a suspicion of reality. He couldn't forget the man who had spiders set upon him, and the more men he tackled on the subject of native curses the more his laughter took on a hollow note. For planters, traders and seamen to whom he casually introduced the subject were all dubious. They had lived a long time south and east of Hell's Gate and they had seen things . . . and heard things . . .

"It's a lot o' bunk!" declared Mr. O'Shane, but whenever he thought of it he took an extra long pull on the bottle to stop his nerves from twitching. He was a weak man. And it did not help matters that many of his fellow officers took to chaffing him about snakes.

This present voyage, for example. The *Salawar* was pushing her blunt and rusty snout into the lazy swell of a shimmering Indian Ocean. They were bound for

Moulmein for a cargo of teakwood logs for Bombay, and the second mate reminded Mr. O'Shane of a certain disturbing fact.

"Teakwood logs, eh?" he said. "You'd better look out, then. You know you can load as many snakes as logs up that stinking river."

"Oh, shut up!" snarled Mr. O'Shane.

"Well, I thought you'd just like to be reminded. That wench back in Madagascar might have a special snake fixed up for you."

O'Shane stumped away for a drink.

But the *Salawar* loaded teakwood logs for a week without incident. Her first officer thought snakes for a week and could not forget them even with frequent reference to his supply of Highland Nectar. Teakwood logs being what they are, and Moulmein being what it is, ship's officers had to think of snakes even in the ordinary run of events. As it happened, there wasn't even a minor sting among the native stevedores. But just the same Mr. O'Shane breathed a sigh of relief when the *Salawar* finally pushed her creaking, leisurely way seaward once more, the holds full and on her decks a cargo that rose to a height of eight feet.

MR. O'SHANE left the bridge that night at eight o'clock, sticky and sweating from the heat and desperately in need of a drink.

The heat in his cabin was terrific. His duck pants and cotton singlet clung to his wet body. He plucked at them, loosened his clothes a little, then unscrewed his for'ard port, which opened on deck. And suddenly his heart turned over and he slammed it shut again with a muttered curse.

"Mother o' God!" he exclaimed. "What a nest for snakes!" The hollow end of a log was against the port.

O'Shane flicked the sweat from his forehead and sat down, limp. He noticed his hands were trembling as he picked up his log book and he swore between his teeth.

"I'm getting like an old woman, that's what!" he told himself savagely, and reaching for his whiskey bottle he poured himself a stiff drink. He secured his chewing tobacco, his log book, his pen and ink and oil lamp, and he went into the saloon where it might be cooler.

The breaking of the darkness as he brought his lamp into the place sent the cockroaches scurrying over the edge of the table, and setting his things down O'Shane vented some of his feelings upon them, stamping them into nothing on the deck. The *Salawar* rolled a little to the ground swell. He steadied himself, then dropped into a chair with a grunt of relief and arranged his log book for writing.

He called to the boy in the pantry.

"Fetch me a candle," he ordered sharply. "This damned lamp would roast the devil himself. And then ye can make me a cup o' tea." He muttered to himself, ripped off his sweat-soaked singlet, and all but naked he went to work.

Now, just why it is that a sudden and all but irrelevant thought will come to a man may not be known. O'Shane was utterly absorbed in his log book, was thinking of nothing else. All that could be heard were the little sounds that only accentuate the silence: the scraping of his pen, the tiny noises of the cockroaches, the tired creaking of the beams as the ship rolled to the swell, and overhead the occasional footsteps of the third mate moving restlessly on the bridge. O'Shane was utterly absorbed in his log book and yet his mind clicked, as it were, in mid-career and he heard something else.

He heard the voice of the woman, as cold—as cold as death. And he could have sworn that the man he had killed was standing by his shoulder, his teeth grinning, his eyes glittering.

O'Shane stopped writing and he did not dare to lift his eyes from his log book. He sat petrified for a moment, not breathing. And then he set his teeth and cursed. It was a lot of rot! He needed another drink, that was all. His nerves were going to pieces. The damned climate! The fever mists of Moulmein . . . perhaps that was it. A touch of fever. A man did hear things at such times. He swallowed hard and could feel his heart pounding in his ears. He cursed again and turned with a jerk to shoot a nervous spit into the spittoon. And then he froze in his chair!

He saw it on the deck, in the shadows

right at his feet, lying in a perfect coil, hood up and not eighteen inches from his right leg. He could even see it swaying in the candlelight as the ship gently rolled. He stared, petrified, his face dead white. And he couldn't move a finger!

He tried to get up. He tried to shout for the steward; but his throat was constricted. No use! He could do nothing. The sweat, ice-cold now, trickled down his face and into his eyes, but he did not notice it. There was a voice screaming in his head, there was a thundering in his ears, and teeth flashed as a woman laughed. The snake would strike and then in a minute . . . two minutes, perhaps . . . he would die. The woman had been right. The snake had come

He was still for the space of three long heartbeats and then a tremor ran through him. He coughed a few times and slumped gently forward, his eyes slowly glazing as he died.

And just within the candlelight the native messboy, a cup of tea in his hand and his teeth flashing in an odd grimace, stood transfixed and gazed at the twitching figure of the first officer with the pallor of death upon him. And then his eyes fell again upon the thing that lay in the shadows, coiled as it had fallen from the waist of O'Shane, glinting strangely in the flickering light, the knotted end propped upright against a stanchion.

The boy had always been fascinated by that scarf. It resembled so much his devil-god. It was as beautiful as a cobra.

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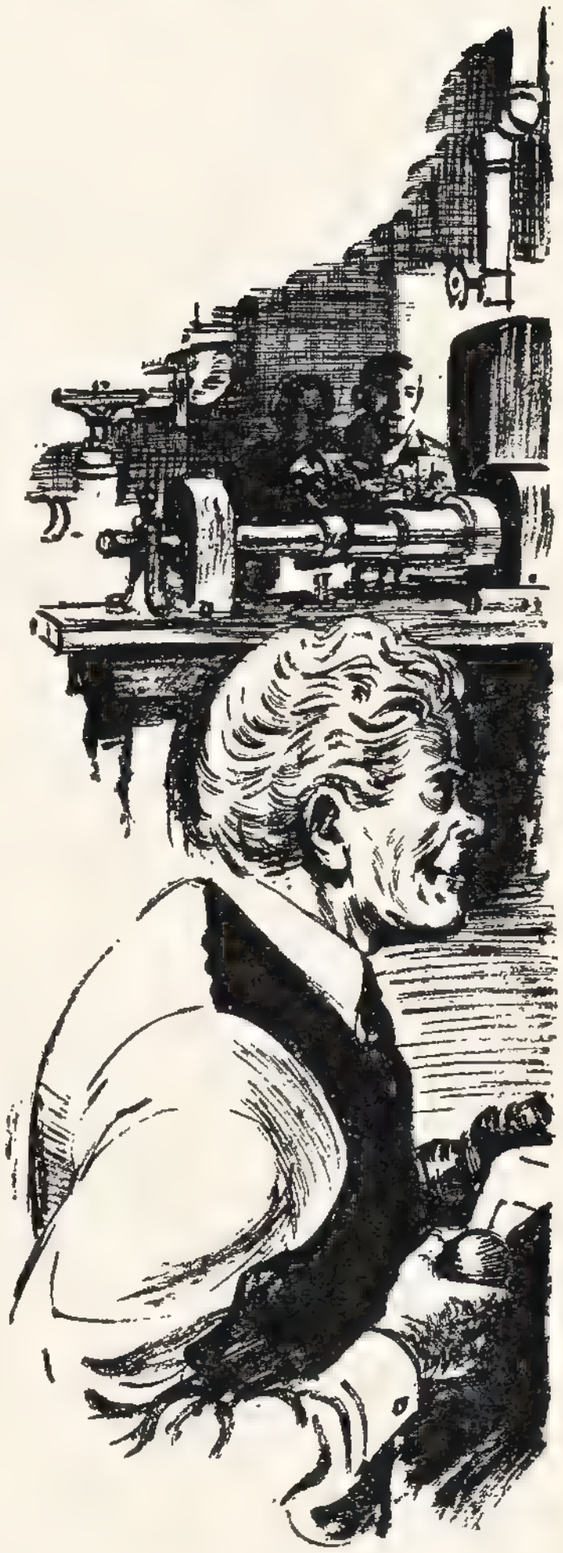
By
JAMES C. LYNCH



I WALK in the front door of the Moses Murphy Machine Shop and if I had been thirty years older I would have been talking to myself. I am scared to death. The one thing that scares me more than women or Mike Hannigan is hitting a new boss for a job.

The office I walk into is tidy as a pin, like Mom keeps our place at home. There is a little man, somewhere between forty and eighty years old, sitting at a desk. He is very neat, with a stiff, starched collar and a thin black tie. He has a fringe of soft gray hair around his bald head and a sweet smile, the kind you see on Santa Claus. No doubt he is a broke-down machinist who Holy Moses Murphy has made a timekeeper.

"Hello, son," he says.

You know how it is with scared guys. You wisecrack and show off to cover up. "Hi, Pop," I say. "How are you? I'd like to talk to Mr. Murphy. Old Holy Moses Murphy, himself."

"Go ahead, son," he says. "Talk."

"Ohhhh!" I say. And I not only needed a job, but I wanted to work for Holy Moses Murphy more than anyone else in the world. I always heard he was a roaring lion, a regular hell-on-wheels guy and somehow I had the idea he was a big man, big as a house, like Mike Hannigan.

Holy Moses Murphy is supposed to be tops in the business. I've talked to boys who had thirty years experience before they went to work for Holy Moses, and after a couple of years with him they were wiser and better men. And Holy Moses has been known to tell a man to pack his tools and get right over to this

ILLUSTRATED BY JOSEPH A. FARREN

I catch Mike's clumsy right fist on my left arm —and then I nail him.

shop or that one, they had just asked him to recommend a good foreman or superintendent, and good luck to you, mister.

"I'm sorry," I say. "I thought—I didn't think—"

"Lot of men don't think, son," he says. "World's full of such. What was it you wanted to talk about?"

I lay a USES postal card on his desk. "I've been certified—they sent me—I'm looking for a job."

He looks me over and says, "Unlock your box."

I put my tool box on his desk and unlock it. He throws the lid back and lets down the flap and pulls out the drawers. When he gets done looking I think he knows what color my other suit is. He knows what I've worked on and how long and what I'm best at.

He says, "That's the tidiest tool box I've seen for a long time. You married?"

"No, sir."

"Why not?"

"I don't know," I lie. I can't tell him I'm scared of women, that's why.

"I don't either," he lies. I can tell he knows I'm scared of women. "A young fellow with your build and looks and the money you've been making. Foosh! Where did you work before?"

I tell him and he says, "Why did you leave those places?"

"Well," I say. "Tri-State, they folded. They shut down."

"I know that," he says. "But the other places are still going strong."

I SWALLOW a couple of times and try, but you can't lie to Holy Moses Murphy. Not without him knowing it. "I quit because of Mike Hannigan," I tell him. "That guy seems to follow me around. Mike is a big Irish Mick who always picks on me. He is one of those kind of guys who will hand you a length of bar stock—after he's heated your end with a torch. He will dip his hands in lard or oil and rub his hands in your hair or down the back of your clean shirt. He will nail your lunch pail to the floor so that when you grab it up, you pull the handle off. He does all those things to me."

"Well," says Moses Murphy. "Why don't you break his thick Irish neck?"

"Me?" I say.

"Listen, son," he says. "The difference between a man who can handle men and a man who can't handle men is the man who can handle men makes up his mind he can. The mind is a wonderful thing when it's used right. A man who makes up his mind can do anything."

"Yes, sir," I say, and pick up my box and stand there waiting for him to say, "Sorry, son."

But he says, "Can you hold a one-ten-thousandth constant tolerance on half inch chrome-olly, taking off a twenty-thousandth cut?"

"No sir," I tell him. "I can't do that."

"Good," he says. "I hired a man this morning who said he could. Let's go to work."

He jumps up and opens a back door in the office and leads me down a hall and out another door into the shop. Man, what a place. It's air-conditioned and bright as daylight and the floor is so clean you could drop a cup cake on it and not be afraid to eat the last crumb. There is plenty of room around each machine and each machine is the best money can buy. I have never seen a shop like it and I have never seen a guy like Holy Moses Murphy. He reaches in his pocket and digs out a rubber ball and bounces it and catches it as we walk along. Just like a little kid.

He stops by a big bench covered with shiny plates and magnifying lenses on standards and the best inspection equipment I have ever seen. And this bench is presided over by the most gorgeous girl I have even seen. She even has red hair, my favorite color. The color that scares me most.

Holy Moses stands there and bounces his rubber ball and says, "Mary, I want you to meet Eddie Crosby. He's going to work for us. Eddie, this is Mary Montgomery."

"Hello, Eddie," says Mary.

"Hellllo," I stutter. "Hellllo, Mary."

"Mary is our inspector," says Holy Moses. "She will look over everything you do. It had better be good."

"I will do my best," I say, and I keep standing there, just looking at Mary smile. Gosh!

"Don't mind me," says Holy Moses. "I have lots of time."

"Yes sir," I say, and Mary gives me a cute little wink and goes back to work. I turn around and manage to get my tool box stuck between my legs and stumble and sit down on the box and everybody laughs. The ends of my ears get red hot.

When we finally get going again, Holy Moses says, "Don't get the idea you can get by with anything with that little girl. I've tried to catch her every way I know how, and I know a few hows. I've never been able to fool her. Anything you can do, she can do twice as good."

"Yes sir," I say, still shaking, I don't know what there is about a redheaded woman that makes me feel so incompetent.

"Well, here we are," says Holy Moses. "You'll work on Number Five here, for the time being. There's your locker. The stock's in the rack alongside. Here's the print of the part. Make fifty of them."

The guy at the lathe ahead turns around and I drop my tool box on my toe.

"Mike Hannigan," I say. "I didn't know you worked here."

"Hello, sweetheart," he says. "How's mama's little angel? Sure, I started here this morning. What are you doing here? I thought this was a machine shop."

Holy Moses clears his throat and Mike goes back to work. I get my apron on and my tools out and look at the drawing. It is not a hard piece, but the tolerances are right down to the last notch, even for the best engine lathe made.

HOLY MOSES watches me get started, then walks away. He seems satisfied. When he is gone, Mike Hannigan turns around, puts a greasy hand in my face and gives me a playful shove.

"How are you, Eddie?" he says. "How did you ever get in this dump?"

"Cut it out, Mike," I tell him, wiping my face. "Why don't you grow up?"

"Don't get tough with me, Bud," he says. "I'll punch you in the nose. Did you see that cute little number who is the inspector?"

"Yes," I tell him. "She seems like a nice girl."

"You lay off that redhead," he says. "Don't get any funny ideas, I saw her first."

"Go ahead," I tell him. "It's all right by me."

He lays his dirty hand on my shoulder, leaving a smudge on my shirt. "You're a yella bum, Eddie," he says. "She's all right, that redhead. She might inspect what I do around here, but I'm taking her as she is. If there's anything out of tolerance in that chassis of hers, I'll let it ride. Easy-going Mike, that's me." He nags off a big bite of plug tobacco and goes back to work.

At all the other shops we've worked at, Mike would spit on the floor, but he doesn't dare do that here. He waits until he gets a big mouthful of juice and walks to the scrap barrel. And each time he goes past, he shoves me around or something.

I want to paste him so bad I can cry. But I can't. It's always been that way. He's got the Indian sign on me, I guess. So I won't be here long. I can't work around Mike Hannigan.

I sputter along until noon. Number Five is at an angle that I can watch Mary Montgomery, out of the corner of my eye. That is upsetting enough. Along with Mike, it is too much.

A guy comes in with box lunches and I buy one, hoping Mike will go out to a restaurant. But he buys one, too. So does Mary. When the bell rings and we sit down to eat, Mike starts telling everybody about the tricks he's pulled on me. He gets a lot of laughs. He tells everybody, but he talks right at Mary. Mary listens to him, but she keeps looking at me. The way she looks does not make me feel good.

Holy Moses comes into the shop a lot. He walks around, looking and bouncing his rubber ball. He doesn't say much to anyone, except Mary. He talks with her a lot.

Each time he goes out, I make up my mind to quit the next time he comes in. I am doing lousy work so I might as well quit before I get fired.

Mike keeps his jaws full of chewing tobacco and keeps making his regular trips to the barrel. He's got a cheek full

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SHARK BAIT

By

WILMON MENARD

ILLUSTRATED BY
V. E. PYLES

SOME sportsmen are contemptuous of shark hunting, but I find it particularly exhilarating. The chief complaint fishermen have is that the shark gives up too easily. But not the tiger-sharks of the Dangerous Isles! Yes, I never pass up an opportunity to kill a shark. I still remember my first shark kill, and I am sure it was the most exciting of all. It was off Barbados, in the West Indies. I was seventeen at the time. My harpoon was a crude affair, fashioned out of a shortened, old-fashioned French bayonet, near the point of which I had brazed stout barbs in each of the concavities of its three-edged blade. I also attached an expanding iron-socket to the spear-head, for the reception of a detachable fifteen-foot mangrove pole. A really formidable shark-sticker!

I recall that it was a fine, balmy day, the sun overhead very hot, and the sea blue and sparkling. Standing forward on the harpooner's pulpit, rigged to the bowsprit of the schooner, I had a clean sweep of the sea far ahead. Then, suddenly, I saw a huge black fin cutting the shimmering surface, a hundred yards or so off the port bow. My heart leapt, and I trembled with excitement. The black boys dumped over some pig entrails and blood, and the killer, scenting the blood, turned sharply and cruised back, sliding up silently alongside and gobbling up the viscera. Then it circled away warily. For a moment, I was afraid it had left for good, but five minutes later it swam slowly below the bowsprit.

"Now, take your time!" my father whispered tensely. "Hit hard behind the gills!"

I gripped my harpoon tightly, saw that the line was free, then, when the shark passed underneath again, I drew in my breath sharply and struck downward with all my strength.

"Good boy!" my father shouted loudly.

I felt the pole jerked out of my hand, and the line began whizzing out. With beginner's luck, I had sunk the harpoon deeply in a vital spot behind the gill clefts. The monster pulled out more than fifty yards of the stout line, then went to the bottom where it sulked. But with all of us straining on the line, we pulled it in

The shark was goaded to wild fury now—he circled and charged Mopi, who nimbly somersaulted and came up under the brute for another hard knife-thrust.

A FACT STORY

under the counter, jerked its head out of the water, and with a .45 I sent five slugs into its savage brain before it ceased its wild thrashings. The brute measured more than ten feet. It was my first shark!

Yes, shark-hunting is dangerous and exhilarating. I've seen black boys of the West Indies tease sharks underwater, then expertly slit open their white gleaming bellies with long-bladed shark-knives. In Macassar in the Celebes, tourists are entertained by a small boy fighting a shark in a specially built pool for this commercial and sordid form of amusement. In the Solomon Islands I have seen stalwart natives battle with sharks over fishes trapped in fish-nets, or dynamited. The crafty sharks have learned to rush to a spot when they feel the concussion of dynamite, knowing there will be a feast on the stunned fishes. In Honolulu, I saw a shark's belly ripped open by its captors, and in its stomach was found the mangled arm of a soldier drowned off Waialua.

AFTER experimenting with many types of shark harpoons, I have found that simple swivel-headed harpoons are the best. They are easy to handle and are quite cheap to make. In the deep water, I have used expensive quintuple-barbed harpoons, but when harpooning in a lagoon or bay with shelving coral or rocky ledges, it is rather foolhardy for a shark-hunter to risk losing its costly harpoon-head. A shark often goes for the bottom, and it can very easily foul the line around craggy projections of rock and coral and quickly sever it by its wild antics to free itself from the barbed harpoon. The constant jerking of the line across a sharp piece of rock or coral can rapidly cut it, and the shark is off with your harpoon still in its hide. The killer might perish out at sea, but this is hardly a consolation considering the costliness of a fine quintuple-barbed harpoon.

The hardy natives of Nukurua, and also of other atolls of the Dangerous Islands, are born haters of sharks. In every family of pearl divers you will find a fatality by these marauders of the sea. Among the pearl diving atolls, during the diving season, they are met single-handed by experienced divers, who contemptuously tease them, and then dexterously slash off their flukes, horribly maiming them as a warning to other killers. The sharks, deprived of their steering apparatus, dash headlong into sharp coral ledges and growths, killing themselves; or they are eaten by their cannibalistic brothers and sisters, who have been goaded to the kill by the scent of blood and the helplessness of their mutilated member.

Sharks are cannibalistic by nature. When their food supply becomes scarce, they will slaughter each other. Their style of attack upon another is always the same. They will rush in swiftly and bury their teeth in a victim's stomach, for here a softer and firmer hold is assured. Also, sharks have found each other's entrails quite toothsome. I set out many lines in the lagoon of Nukurua, buoyed with empty oil drums, and when I would go out to inspect them, I'd find my shark had been torn to pieces by others. Everything from the pectoral fin backwards would be gone. When I hoisted my harpooned sharks off the beach by their tails with the block-and-tackle I had lashed to the coconut trunks, their huge mouths would spew out livers, intestines and skin of sharks. The gullet of a shark is merely a large unobstructed tube to its capacious stomach, so when the shark is hoisted by its tail into the air, the gullet and stomach becomes everted, disgorging anything that has not been wholly digested.

On one occasion, I had brought along some lengths of one-half inch iron from Tahiti, and, as there was a small crude forge owned by Higgin's Chinese assistant, Ah Cheung, I quickly made a number of harpoons. I tempered and sharpened them myself, and, if I do say so, they were much better than I could have purchased. Experiences in shark-harpooning had made me a reasonably adept fashioner of harpoons which really work. The iron shank of the harpoon expanded into a wedge-shaped socket for the reception of a pole, and a steel cable was attached to a ring on the harpoon head, to which 100 yards of quarter-inch Norwegian hemp line was tied.

During the night, Roo and I set out shark lines, with the hooks baited with five pounds of eel, and attached to airplane-wire leaders, with 100-foot lengths

of quarter-inch hemp line tied to cocopalms on the beach. This distance from the coral strand, sharks seven and eight feet long foraged. Over the lines I hung two bottles, which, at the slightest jerk or tension, gave out musical tinkles. I would frequently be aroused five and six times during the night by the clinking bottles, and, rushing down with a lantern, we'd have a lively time pulling in the vicious brutes. But sharks couldn't be allowed to lie too long on the beach. They are, without exception, the worst stinkers of the sea. I would quickly strip off their hides and salt them down for shagreen, which made excellent book-binding material.

I harpooned most of my sharks from the coral reefs or ledges. The water was deep below the ledges, and in the blue shadows large man-eaters basked or cruised. Every day, Roo and I scouted along the fringing ledges. The strong combers, crashing loudly over the coral barrier-reefs, were reduced to only a small wash of wavelets, barely more than two or three inches deep by the time it breached over the wide coral mole. The top of the barrier reefs were spongy with marine growths, and I experienced an uncanny sensation as I felt living things, crabs and mollusks, crawl suddenly in fright under my bare tread. I had to maintain strict vigilance that I didn't step on *nohus,* or viperous black sea-urchins. And, of course, I had to be careful not to walk on deceptive coral crusts, which would break and send me into deep water at the mercy of the sharks.

Most times I had to locate my sharks through a glass-paned water-box. The open end of the box was large enough to insert my head, and, placing the glassed-end into the water, I could see fathoms below. In the sunlit depths fish of every imaginable shape and color swam: schools of butterfly fish, with long gossamer tails, flitting between coral fans; silvery mullets; sea horses; sea cucumbers; rainbow fish, and red and blue parrot-fish; groupers and wrasse. There were fantastic miniature trees and shrubs; yellow and pink coral vines; seaweed, prolific as coral, of purple and mauve colors. On white sandy spaces I could see sea anemones, urchins, sponges, hermit crabs and turbos, all of such varied hues and shapes that they defied description. Often I would see the flat-boned, broad heads of giant conger-eels protruding from coral grottoes.

But sharks were my pet hates, and I would soon be snapped out of my reverie by the sight of a long gray body cruising into the picture. Then I'd put my water-box aside, and toss bloody fragments of eels and fishes into the lagoon. I wouldn't have to wait long. Sharks have the most sensitive snouts in the world. A fin would suddenly break the still surface of the lagoon. Slowly, craftily the monster would circle about, then, with a rush, would come at the floating fragments with which I had chummed it. Then I had to work fast. At a distance of twenty to thirty feet, I could chance launching a spear. Sometimes I got the shark the first time, many times I missed, and on rare occasions the shark, casting all caution aside, would come back again, even after being wounded, and would generously give me another try. A blood-crazed shark will do strange things. Once I saw sharks, maddened by blood, go berserk. I had dumped some pig's entrails and blood into the sea, and within five minutes, the water bristled with fins. I wounded one with a harpoon thrust, and the other killers immediately tore the crippled shark to ribbons. Then, with nothing else to eat, they turned on each other. It was a wild and terrible scene of cannibalism. Again, I smeared some blood on the snout of a "dead" shark we had pulled up on the coral strand, and its mouth opened and closed spasmodically, and its whole body trembled. The smell of blood had brought it back momentarily from the grave!

THE job of landing a shark is not an easy one. Although these gangsters of the deep will not do a Highland-fling, or the rumba on the surface, they can be obstinate as mules. They will pull and charge like enraged bulls. Believe me, it's back-breaking labor pulling one in. Then, once you've beached it, you can exhaust yourself trying to make it let go its stubborn hold on life. The natives usually beat out their brains with clubs and spears, but I soon found an easier way to finish mine off. I inserted a sharp knife, attached to a stout shaft, into one of the gill

clefts back of the pectoral fin, and, giving it a hard turn, would neatly sever the main artery in the neck.

There was, of course, a limit to the size of sharks I could harpoon in the lagoons of Nukurua. Sharks over ten feet long would not enter the lagoon. Although the reef-passage was quite wide, there were some shoal heads here, and a wily man-eater will not enter a lagoon from which it cannot make a quick egress. A shark is a dastard at heart, and, when the odds become too great for it in conflict, it will turn and run.

One morning, Roo and I, aided by four Nukuruans, went shark-hunting in the outer sea in a small cutter that had called at the atoll. I did not have to wait long for a target for my quintuple-barbed harpoon. The shark fought us stubbornly for more than an hour, but it was worth the tussle. After much heaving we got its head out of the water, amidships. We dangled a large shark-hook, baited with fish, over the side and, although wounded, it bit at it, and the hook sank deeply into the jaw cartilage. In its mad thrashings it got the bronze leader between its teeth and had almost bitten the links through. I ran a bo'line-and-bit down the leader and got it back of the monster's gills. One of the Nukuruans had lashed a block to the rigging and I threw the bit through the open-slot and we heaved strongly. When the shark had been hoisted high enough, I cut the main artery in its neck.

I was really proud of this brute. It was the largest I had harpooned in the Dangerous Isles. It measured more than thirteen feet. The shark's jaws were more than three feet in circumference, fully opened, an opening large enough for a boy's shoulders and hips to pass through comfortably. Indeed, the natives of the Dangerous Isles know full well that it was a *mako* (shark) that swallowed *Iona* (Jonah), and not a *tohora* (whale).

A shark's teeth are really most terrifying. No marine monster, save possibly the giant barracuda, has such an infernal and wicked system of teeth. They are large, sickle-shaped and are of indestructible pure enamel. The glass-like enamel on the edges of each finely serrate denticle will cut a hair as cleanly as a razor.

Late that afternoon, Roo and I began cutting away the jaws of the shark, which I intended keeping for a souvenir. Stripping the skin away from the lower jaw and throat, I found that this region was impregnated with the stings of rays, or sea-bats. I even found them between the rows of teeth, deeply embedded in the gums and cartilage, and in the muscle masses adherent to the jaws I found thirty-three stings. These dagger spines of the rays, double-edged and saw-toothed, were driven four and five inches into the cartilage and membranes, some buried in cysts, attesting to long wounds, while others were surrounded by congested blood, tell-tale signs of recent conflicts. In the stomach of the shark were fragments of leopard rays *(aetobatus narinari)* and cartilaginous fragments of their skeletons.

Incidentally, a shark will go far out of its way to take a bite out of a ray. This is not to be wondered at when you stop to consider that sharks and rays are the oldest form of marine life, and probably the stock from which all other fishes evolved, so any antipathy toward one another must be instinctive. Although they differ somewhat in external aspect and their means of attack and defense, they are related in structure. In sharks and rays the skeleton remains cartilaginous, instead of hardening into bone. Each, likewise, has a three-valved heart, a spiral valve in the intestines, but no air-bladder. When you slice off the "wings" of a ray, you have a small, though perfectly formed shark, with the same underslung mouth. I think they are closely related, and if so, it is only one more point in proof of a shark's cannibalistic traits. It revels in slaughtering its own kind.

I always used leopard rays for shark bait whenever I could catch them. The large rays normally lived close to the lagoon floor, where they fed on mollusks and marine animals on the bottom. But they often came to the surface to bask, and that is when I had an opportunity to harpoon them. Once, I carelessly permitted my legs to come too close to the deadly spine of a ray and I received a grazing stab. It was a superficial wound, but the slime on the sting set up a chemical poison, together with the poison it ejected from the small poison-gland at the base of the spine, that flowed down the grooved

sting into the flesh and blood. The swelling was rapid and the pain excruciating. It laid me up for six days.

The natives of Nukurua asked me, as a special favor, not to hunt the great blue shark. This species, they firmly believed, were not of a rapacious nature, and were supposed to be protected by *Tane,* a powerful god of the sea, who would severely punish anyone molesting them. I had no quarrel with blue sharks. Tiger-sharks *(Galeocerdo tigrinus)* were my victims, those gray, vicious bullies of the sea, running in numbers, launching sudden and cowardly attacks upon weaker prey, but always turning tail and streaking off when the odds became too great for them. Treacherous, cowards, at heart, and with souls of scavengers, these gangsters of the deep are the most despicable of all the *lamnidae* family of sharks.

I HAVE had, of course, many harrowing experiences shark-hunting. You can't fool around them long without running risks of having a leg or an arm chewed off. Once, while swimming in the lagoon of Nukurua toward the beach, with a string of fishes which I had just speared tied to my waist, a small baby shark slid up stealthily and tore the fishes away, missing my stomach by only a few inches! Although not endowed with sharp eyesight, its sense of smell has been highly developed, as I have stated. Animal or human blood, spilled into the water, will bring this killer from a great distance. It worries its victim like a wolf, circling about it in constantly diminishing circles. Then a sudden rush and savage attack. When surprised or cornered, it bites first and then flees, if the odds are too great. It will run away from a formidably large barracuda, and most times from a man swimming. Most casualties concerning sharks and swimmers can be attributed to the shark biting out of curiosity, or colliding accidentally with another strange object. Because of their poor eyesight, sharks have learned from experience to use their teeth first when striking another mobile object underwater.

A few months previous to my coming to Nukurua, I had witnessed a sight at the Island of Rapa, to the south of Tahiti, which has made me a shark's enemy for life. Frequently, in the afternoon, off the headlands of the Bay of Ahurei, I would see schools of young whales, guarded by huge bulls, on their frolicsome way south to polar waters. On this occasion, I suddenly saw two small whales, no doubt stragglers from the main school, blithely tarrying and sporting on the sunlit surface of the ocean. A native suddenly gripped my arm and pointed toward them, crying hoarsely, "*Makos!* Sharks!" Rushing out through the headlands of the bay were countless sharks, who had long awaited such a chance to ambush whales, singly or in pairs. In a minute or so, the water bristled with the black fins of the killers, as they closed in on the now startled young whales. Before the whales could sound, their flukes were ripped to pieces and their great bulks torn to shreds by the hungry, bloodthirsty pack. From that moment on I declared unceasing war on tiger-sharks.

Native divers, working pearl-shell beds underwater, have frequently collided with sharks and have had their arms or legs seized and, with a mad wrench, the monsters have stripped off the skin and flesh, leaving lengths of white bone protruding. Several divers in the Dangerous Isles, with whom I have talked, have crashed headlong into sharks, while descending, and the brutes have sheered off parts of their jaws and cheek, leaving their teeth gleaming wolfishly in their ravaged faces forever after.

But the most wonderful story in the Dangerous Islands is the tale of how a giant Tuamotuan, Mopi by name, rode on the back of a huge tiger-shark. French traders, schooner captains and colonial officials verify the account, so I accept it as the gospel truth. While gathering pearl-shell underwater at the pearl-diving atoll of Hikueru, Mopi bumped heads with a shark. The monstrous creature, fully twelve feet long, circled swiftly and attacked him. Mopi, caught off-guard, was forced to seek refuge in a coral cavern. But the shark lunged in after him and Mopi, seeing no escape, leapt desperately upon its back, burying his strong fingers in the wide, deep gills. The shark, enraged and startled, headed with express-train speed for the surface. There the

brute barrel-rolled and leapt clear out of the water with terrifying impact, trying to free itself of its rider. It suddenly shot to the bottom again, crashing wildly through brittle coral trees and growths, slashing Mopi cruelly. Again it zoomed to the surface, blood gushing from its torn gills. This time it headed toward the submerged reef near the native village, where it accidentally beached itself. There the villagers, who had lined the coral strand, watching with horrified eyes Mopi's amazing ride, attacked the shark with spears and clubs. Mopi walked unaided to the beach, his entire body bleeding and torn by the shark's rough skin and collisions with coral. Then, seized with blind rage, he whirled around suddenly, ran back to the dying shark and gave it a smashing blow in the snout with his fist. But, at that instant, the shark's jaws flashed wide —and Mopi's hand was gone!

I had always hoped to meet this extraordinary Tuamotuan, and one morning this wish was fulfilled. A loud, yodeling call aroused me just after dawn one day, and when I protruded my head from my palm-leaf hut, I saw a Polynesian giant standing beside a beached sailing-canoe. He had only a blue and white *pareu* tied around his loins, and his muscular body was scarred by long serrated, livid scars, the tell-tale decorations of a veteran shark-killer. His head was massive, with tight, crisps ringlets of gray hair massed low upon his wide forehead. His eyes were large and liquid, tender, though giving the impression of absolute fearlessness.

When he saw me, he grinned and waved gaily. His right hand was severed at the wrist.

" 'Ullo, big boy!" he cried in a deep, booming voice. "My name Mopi! I been Frisco! I walk down Market Street! By cripes, yah! *Vera ka hau!* Hot stuff!"

(Mopi had once voyaged to San Francisco on a copra schooner, where he had picked up an amazing vocabulary of English words.)

He rushed up to me and threw the scarred stump of his arm around my shoulders in a rough hug. It was an eerie embrace.

"I come Nukurua. I hear you no like *makos!*" he shouted, blowing the fumes of coconut toddy in my face. "I say, damn hell to sharks! I think we give 'em blentay hell. By cripes, yah!"

MOPI shared my simple breakfast with me, washing it down with a mighty draught of palm toddy he had brought with him. He wanted to show me some tricks with sharks underwater, so we hurriedly launched the canoe across the lagoon to the foraging ground of the sea-gangsters. The surface of the lagoon was unruffled, and the marine garden which spread out below us could be seen as clearly as if viewed under an immense magnifying-glass, making shapes and sizes of marine life and plants appear gigantic and grotesque. No soil or mud fouled the crystal-clear depth, nor was there any debris floating in it, as the coral was hard and brittle and shed no particles to cloud the pellucidity of the water. The shifting sunlight wavered in wide ribbons of light through the water and was reflected from the coarse, sandy bottom and stark-white coral ledges, shooting through the green translucence again and again in diffused rays, creating halations around coral grottoes and spires, and casting deep shadows in coral caverns where lagoon monsters were possibly hidden. The sun's rays shifted and filtered through the rough, uneven windows of ancient battlemented coral castles and poured in subdued patterns through interminable forests of coral trees in which blue butterfly fish flitted. Now, a shaft of light would transfix the sliding body of a barracuda or a small lagoon shark, or the green, slimy sheen of a twisting, convulsing conger-eel. It was like an amazing kaleidoscope.

When I turned around to speak with Mopi, who was in the stern paddling, I saw that he was affixing a leather stirrup terminating in a brass-cap on his wrist-stump. In the center of the brass end was a threaded hole. He reached down, grinning, and lifted up an object wrapped in an oily cloth. When he unrolled it, I saw it was a long triple-edged knife. This he screwed securely into the threaded hole of the brass-guard.

"I give sharks blentay hell!" he yelled, waving it truculently in the air.

I indicated the deep water near the pass, where the sharks came to forage, and,

after inspecting the depth through a water-box, he nodded his head in agreement. In the blue murk, shadowed by the overhanging coral ledges, he had seen the long gray shapes of large sharks. He pointed out a huge brute to me that was cruising slowly among the smaller sharks.

"He feel my knife first!"

The canoe rocked suddenly, and Mopi was over the side, with hardly a ripple to mark his descent. Through the water-box, I watched him descend feet-first, the knife flashing brightly in the clear water. Then, at a depth of about ten feet, he turned and shot like a torpedo, head first, for the bottom. The smaller sharks took instant flight at his intrusion, but the large monster he had singled out circled him warily at a distance. Mopi swam toward the shark boldly, the knife-arm extended. The killer swam deeper and Mopi followed him, until I could see only a shadowy outline of shark and man. A few seconds later, they rose higher, and I suddenly saw Mopi make a quick lunge at the shark. Mopi's face was upturned now, and I could see that he was "making faces" at the puzzled shark. I wondered if the palm liquor had not made Mopi too reckless.

Then Mopi's fixed sword flashed out and a small jet of gray smoke was ejected from the belly of the monster. (Blood in seawater at this distance becomes gray in color.) The shark was goaded to wild fury now, and circled quickly and charged Mopi, who nimbly somersaulted, swimming deeper, and then came up under the brute for another hard knife-thrust. Mopi was tormenting the shark now in the manner a picador does a bull. The shark was now leaking puffs of gray smoke in two places. Again the native swam nimbly around a coral fan, and pricked the thrashing, enraged shark. Then—danger! A small though dangerous-sized shark came into the scene, attracted by the blood of the punctured monster. It saw Mopi first and headed toward him; but the Tuamotuan was not to be caught napping, and when the small shark swam past, flashing its jaws for a bite, he sank the knife deeply into its neck just back of the gills. The shark was moving away from him at the time, and, by its own momentum, drew the knife out clean, without jerking Mopi around. The shark floundered weakly off, vomiting blood from its gulping mouth.

But the large shark was still to be reckoned with. It rushed in for a swift attack upon Mopi, and the native jerked his body aside, just in time to save his limbs from a cruel bite. Mopi realized that he was exposing himself needlessly to danger with so much blood in the water, so he quickly reached out and grabbed a fluke of the brute, twisting his body under its stomach, and, at the same time, sinking his knife deeply into its belly. Then he released his hold on its fluke, allowing the force of the shark's motion through the water to rip open its own stomach. Blood and entrails poured out of the shark's sliced belly. The shark swam in a wobbly fashion, finally giving a convulsive tremble and sinking slowly toward the bottom of the lagoon.

Mopi came to the surface, blowing his nose lustily, and began to blow whistling gasps through his clenched teeth with that peculiar fashion divers in the Tuamotus have, to relieve their strained lungs and to accustom their lung muscles to normal action.

Then he climbed unaided into the canoe, unscrewed his bayonet and wrapped it in the fish-oil saturated rag.

He gestured down into the lagoon's depth. "Now you go down and give *makos* hell."

I gave Mopi a long, speculative stare. "My good friend," I finally announced, grinning, "when I want to cut short my life I'll try to find a pleasanter way of doing it than rubbing noses underwater with sharks."

Mopi gave me a broad, understanding smile. "Maybe you right."

HUNTING PARTY

By T. C. McCLARY

ILLUSTRATED BY
NICK EGGENHOFER

Ambrose ripped out a savage yell and cried, "Charge!" Sabers gleamed and they struck the undecided Indians with cold steel.

CAPTAIN ZACHARIAH MAXWELL, retired and now en route to find gold at Bozeman, rode out of the brash white glare into Fort Phil Kearney and found his old classmate, Captain Graham, out on duty. His first concern was to scrub down and shave. After this, he soaked in the heat and dust and rawness of the small post and was badly impressed by almost everything he saw.

Keyed truculence hung like a smell about the men; there was laxity wherever he looked. He saw men sleeping and gaming who could have been policing and dressing up the post if nothing better. There was an arrogant sloppiness that needed discipline.

He was a man who had served with considerable dash at crack parade posts along the Potomac, and he had been a staff officer with gallantry and courage during the war. Now what he saw brought mixed disapproval and concern.

At four o'clock, he watched Graham form out of the swirls of lifting yellow heat beyond the gate; by four-thirty, they had cracked the ice of time and distance and fallen into friendly heckling. The condition of the post was a reflection of its commander. Not wishing to say this outright, yet wishing to make Graham remember better times, Maxwell said, "But damn it, George, there's not a shred of regulations and deportment here, and where you've got no discipline, you've got no *esprit de corps!* No wonder the redskins aren't impressed into respect . . . you've got a bunch of thugs, not soldiers!"

Graham's thought went back to the charming dashing life of the eastern posts, the background from which this opinion came. There had been discipline at those neat green and white trimmed posts. There had been military ethics in fighting, and even at Shiloh, they had found time and the desire to strike heroic martial poses. Looking back at it, it seemed like magnificent but damned fool child's play.

"Maybe you're right, Max," he conceded amiably. "It is about what the inspecting officers from Washington think. The last time I requisitioned new carbines, they said our guns were in good

enough order, but they sent out six bathtubs!"

"There is no seriousness in you!" Maxwell accused. "And sooner or later it will show up in your troopers!"

Sergeant Ambrose rolled toward them from barracks along the echoing boardwalk. He saluted with the inevitable explosion of dust, and thereafter dropped formality with a good spit. He was a man built of solid iron and rock, black of hair and smoldering of eye, and with a black-burned, high-boned face holding hues of dark brick red. His collar was open, his tunic unbuttoned nearly to his waist. His knuckles were raw against his sunburned flesh, and there was a suspiciously recent gash above one eye.

He said, "I was delayed in the line of duty, Captain."

Graham regarded him with a twinkle. "The duty would not have left you too sore for a little ride, Sergeant?"

"Not me!" Ambrose grinned. "But I am afraid I will be short a man."

"A squad will be sufficient," Graham said. "I want you to circle up through the Big Horns from Clear Creek and find out why Red Cloud's braves have suddenly found that country such good hunting."

"Ah!" Ambrose breathed, with kindling lights in his gaze. "Maybe we will bag an antelope or two to break the monotony of issue diet!" He cocked an eye speculatively at the sun dropping out of the molten cauldron of the sky. "I'd say nine o'clock would be a good time for departure, sir."

Graham nodded and casually returned the casual salute. Maxwell said with perplexity, "George, you have staled! That man sounded more as if this might be a good hunting party than duty!"

"Maybe it will be," Graham grinned without disturbance.

"They will go out there and spend their time fishing," Maxwell said with conviction. "I would like to see the report!" He looked at Graham with sudden sharpness, almost with accusation. "You gave him no general orders!"

Graham looked tolerantly amused, but through it his eyes held a grim, hard light. "Max," he said, "there is only one general order out here . . . Don't get killed if you can help it!"

SERGEANT AMBROSE inspected his men, saw to the muffling of bridle chains and accouterments with rags, and for a short space, debated with himself the taking of extra blankets. He met their eyes in the shadowed yellow lantern light and said, "No, the extra weight is liable to become heavy before we're back."

"It is liable to get damned cold in those hills!" Corporal Lacey grunted.

"Cold or stiff, which will ye be?" Ambrose growled, and promptly answered his own question. "Cold. Saddles, and keep yer big mouth shut."

The log gates of the fort swung back. They moved out in a column of twos, sinking into the fluid, star-washed shadows of the plains. They rode silently until after midnight, holding to the troughs and valleys. There was no breeze and the heat of day held, and a great dust cloud from a buff herd hung clear to the horizon.

He pulled them up in a stand of thick brush. He sat for a space with eyes narrowed upon the silhouette of the horizon, nose lifted and ears strained, and a hand upon his horse's neck for any telltale tightening of muscles he might feel. He let his senses reach out and bring back reactions, too fine for the brain to define or grasp.

Lacey said, "There are some rocks where we can build a fire."

"It will be cold camp," Ambrose grunted. "What do you want, to wake up without yer head?"

Lacey growled, "You couldn't see it from atop that rise!"

"But a Sioux could see the glow on the dust cloud three miles away!" Ambrose snapped. "Unsaddle and picket to yer own heads and get what sleep you can."

He stood on the ground until the grumbling men had pulled their saddle blankets over them and their breathing was regular and heavy. He moved out to a distance and sat down, listening to the infinitesimal small noises of the night form a mood of silence that held the prairie. Vaguely, he sensed the movement of the horses, and the breathing of the men, and beyond the rise an owl hooted. His attention sharpened and he

leaned, putting his ear flat against the ground. If there were Sioux lying near, they would be telegraphing through the ground. The owl hooted once again, and then there was silence, and after an hour, he joined the circle of his men.

Fifteen minutes before gray smudged the paling east he had his men awake and in the saddle and moved down through a trough between the hills. At dawn, they reined up beneath a rim and looked back. Nothing stirred around their campsite or on their trail.

He grinned and felt a man's gratification at something well done. The Sioux lay thick as flies in the hills around a fort. "Well, we have given them the slip!" he said. He led off in a brisk canter to warm off their chill. At the mouth of Long Chimney he said, "All right, buckos. Make a fire and eat hearty. The smoke will come out six miles away."

"You bet, eat hearty!" Lacey grumbled. "It may be the last fire he gives us for a week. Compared to these hanting red-skinned ghosts, the rebels were just giving us a party!"

In mid-afternoon they hit the Clearwater. Watering up, they moved over behind a parallel line of low chopped hills and began to climb the uptilt of the plains to where they broke against the wild and torn shoulders of the Big Horns. Here and there they cut Sioux sign, but nothing of any account, and nothing recent. They broke from timber into the high grasses of the upslanting shelf, and the vast lonely solitude of the Big Horns blew its breath upon them. It showed instantly in the changing humor of the men. Their easily aroused temper and laughter sank alike behind expectant and tight and watchful care.

THREE days out from Fort Phil Kearney, Ambrose looked out from noon camp and thought he saw a jackrabbit pop over the hazy brow of a hill. He finished his meal and wiped his kit clean with grass, and coming erect, stretched his big, rawboned body.

His mind was still on the rabbit, although there were no rabbits out in this high heat and there had not been any antelope in the bowl. His eyes took on a dry and hard expression. He said, "Keep a sharp eye, boys. I think I smell Sioux."

"You think," Lacey corrected informatively for the group, "you saw a jackrabbit pop along the brow of that hill. But being a Pennsylvania Dutchman, you will have us believing it was something whispered you by a hex at the stroke of midnight in the dark of the moon."

"One of these fine days," Ambrose growled, "I am going to be sending that big mouth of yours to Red Cloud to wear around his stomach! I do not like the way we're picking up no sign."

He barked a gruff command and they pulled in their horses from picket. Shortly, they rode in column across the bowl and up across the sheer face of a chalk blue bluff onto a brim. Half a continent opened eastward to their view. From here on they were in a world of wind and space and sky. The valleys grew narrower and the walls slit with dark, dank gorges. They skirted precipices that reared and leaned over their heads.

"It is eerie country," Ambrose said. "Lacey, what sign have ye cut since noon?"

"None," Lacey told him. "Not even a bend of last year's grass."

"Then they are around us thick as snakes or they have moved up into Medicine Wheel for hunting. Keep a sharp eye."

The light softened into evening tints and the haze drifted slowly clear. At sundown they cut sign, smoke signals rising sheer as mist against a dark red butte. They stopped and watched with grim fatalism, trying, from the angle, to make out where the signals were meant for. Every one of them had been through at least part of the Rebellion, and they were long since past heroics. A man fought, and won if possible, when the time came, but he tried to sneak an edge on trouble. In the war, it had been a matter of guts and stubbornness and daring. Fighting Indians was a question of surprise and craft.

Ambrose said, "It is my guess we have walked into the middle of them and they have us cornered like ferrets on a rat."

"Always a happy thought from our sergeant," Lacey grunted. "This is Yellow Fang's country, Ambrose, and he ain't

Red Cloud's nephew for nothing. When he closes, he will have called in ten times our number."

"Maybe he won't close," Ambrose speculated. "It is hard country for a war party to make a quick gather."

He turned his horse down through a wash into a valley filling with the tide of deep blue shadow. Watering their horses, they watched the crimson-jonquil splash of sundown in the creek. Ambrose ordered forage and camp and a screened fire. As dark dropped like a net cast from the bright peaks, the men made bivouac and ate.

"Well, we've found what we wanted," Lacey allowed. "They are up in here thick."

"Don't get homesick," Ambrose warned. "We're not going back until we've circled Cloud Peak."

"We're martyrs to his damned Dutch vanity!" Lacey growled. "He wants a furlough and to get it he will have us massacred in glory!"

The men grinned. The long shadows reached out from the mountains, thickening over them wave upon wave. It grew pitch-dark down there while day still lingered in the sky.

Ambrose stretched back against his saddle, watching the green-and red-licked shadows of the men against the fire. The smells of wood and bacon and coffee were on the air, mixing with those cavalry smells of oiled steel and well-soaped leather and horse-sweat and dust. There was an arrogance in the occasional glint of a brass buckle, and there was hard, combative pride in all of them, and there was trust and comradeship in the troopers' low talk. It formed a close intimacy of fighting men such as civilians never know.

The courage and loyalty and friendship of the cavalry were all here in this small scene. It was something that lifted a man's feelings with its bigness and yet let him feel big and individual within it. It was a thing they cursed and grumbled about and said they hated; but every one of them signed up again when the time came.

He flexed broad shoulders against the ache of muscles and sat forward a moment enjoying the spread of dampness that drifted out along the creek. He watched Lacey knock out his stinking pipe and bank the fire, and then he came erect.

"All right," he said. "No noise, no talk and no spitting from you filthy chewers! We are going to saddle up and move downstream."

"Down?" Lacey queried. Most usually, you rode against the current, finding surer footing, more control.

"Down, are ye deaf?" Ambrose growled. "And hold yer horses up." He saddled, and scattered a little dirt upon the fire so that it gave the merest glow. Mounting, he led out into the stream, and looking back, saw even the nearest man blanketed by the deep shadows of the cottonwoods along the banks.

TWO miles down, moonlight began to spread across the peaks. With its coming, they would be picked out clear against the water as in a lighted mirror. He pushed his horse a little faster, head swinging like a bird-dog's from bank to bank. A mile further, he found a wash of shale and rock, and put his horse up the bank.

Circling back, he stopped below the crest of a ridge that gave down on the camp they'd left.

They heard sharp coyote calls ripping off from there and answered through the hills. He grinned, feeling a warm satisfaction at a successful trick. "They came in for the feast and couldn't find the carcass!" he chuckled. "They will freeze half into a fever tonight looking for us upcreek."

"While we," Lacey grunted, "will be toast-warm in a cabin!"

"For certain," Ambrose answered mockingly, and led the way into a brush-darkened ravine. "Cold camp," he ordered.

At dawn they moved back upstream. They found moccasin prints beside their first evening camp and ate breakfast over the poked up coals.

It was several hours before the sun reached them to warm off their chill. The valleys became narrower and their walls sheer. The trees shortened and grew gnarled, and the peaks turned jagged and enormous, rearing straight overhead. They

moved steadily upgrade. Altitude began to show in their harder breathing.

By noon they were cutting sign on Yellow Fang's warriors, travelling Sioux fashion, in groups of twos and threes, but always travelling so that a war party could be called together by a signal. Lacey said, "They are not just hunting. They are headed somewhere."

"There is a big wagon train heading up from Laramie for Bozeman," Ambrose said. "These damned Sioux have a telegraph better than our wired one!"

They had eluded trailing for the moment, Yellow Fang's braves having turned downstream in hot pursuit after finding no trace of them above. The sergeant led them at a rapid pace. In mid-afternoon, they came into a stand of gum pine, and with feelings akin to heresy, he had them coat their metal and smear on charcoal to dull the shine.

Sunset caught them on a high plateau between the mountain ridges, and there was not a man but did not curse him for the blankets he had not let them pack. Lacey growled belligerently, "We'll be stiff as boards if we should get a dawn attack!"

"Pile up some dirt here," Ambrose said, and picking a ditch, piled in brush and wood. He had it covered with dirt leaving an opening at each end, and just at sundown, put a fire into the long shallow trough. They cooked and stoked the fire again, covering it with another layer of dirt, and slept with their bellies across this heated strip. Their middles roasted while their two ends froze. Within two hours of sunset it was bitter chill, and late in the night they were drenched by icy rain.

They dug their trench open at dawn and made breakfast upon the coals. They moved down through a damp gorge all morning shivering, then sweated furiously while they climbed a sun-blistered shoulder to a shelf. They felt the sun's rays lift bubbles in the flesh around their necks. Their dappled horses were solid black with sweat.

From the shelf, they looked down and saw puffs and plumes of dust moving northward and converging upon the valley that twisted out through the mountains below Fort C. F. Smith. Ambrose said, "How many scattered parties do you make out, Lacey?"

"Five," Lacey grunted. "That is quite a party."

"I make out six," Ambrose said.

"You would!" the corporal growled. He scowled at the sergeant, then swung his head with consideration toward the plumed head of Cloud Peak. "That closes the circle trail. How the hell we going to get out of here?"

"Right where you're looking," Ambrose allowed and tore a fresh chew from a black plug. "We will use High Pass."

"The horses will never stand the pull!"

"Then we'll carry 'em," Ambrose answered unruffled, and gave a copious spit.

They dropped over the rim of the shelf and down onto the gouged and canyoned uptilt of Devil's Table. A tangle of fresh trails made a crazy pattern across the floor, rambling, according to the ease of travel, but all converging toward the valley. There was sign of pole drags and sledges, which meant the Sioux were moving their women and belongings, and were travelling in tribal numbers. They were right smack in the middle of them, probably, and it was a thought that put a tightness clean down their spines.

They travelled the troughs and drybeds, with flankers scouting every rise. Twice they pulled back hastily and stood with hands warningly on their horses' muzzles while groups of Sioux drifted diagonally across their track. It was slow and tricky going, ten yards travelled for every one gained due forward. Sundown caught them still on the Table, and they found they had again been spied by trailing scouts. Smoke signals were rising from the ledge where they had looked down on the valley.

"They may know where we are, or it may only be a guess from sign," Ambrose said. "In any case, it is cold supper, lads."

"Some day," Lacey grumbled, "I am going to go on a nice easy scout with you. We will only run up against the devil."

They were dog-tired, but with darkness, Ambrose pushed them along, and in two hours they climbed the steep grade of a high ridge. The top held no cover but sparse brush and boulders and was flat as a pan. They made cold camp, shivering under saddle blankets.

AT MIDNIGHT, a wind lifted out of dead calm and and slashed at them with a vicious whine. Cloud Peak's crown was ripped in fragments against a cold white moon. The wind bit at their flesh and knifed through their bones, and the cold came down in numbing, solid layers. The horses were down, and now Ambrose kicked them up, and put on alternate horse guards to keep them whipped into motion.

At daylight, the wind stopped as at a signal. Lacey cursed, "It would! Now we'll likely roast!"

Ambrose inspected their pinched, blue-fleshed faces and pounded some blood into their backs. "At least, we're not roasting on a fire yet!"

"We're likely to," Lacey growled. "There are only two ways down, both single file and tricky, and there will be Sioux ambush at both trail-ends."

"They'll have a long wait," Ambrose told him.

Lacey looked at him with angered, mocking gaze. "You see any nice fresh springs around up here?"

"You talk too much," Ambrose grunted. "Keep yer big trap shut before I put a fist in it!"

He moved along the edge of the ridge afoot, eyes searching the sheer walls. Where there was grade, it was almost perpendicular, and mottled with sharp outcroppings and treacherous slides. Even the faint Big Horn trail rambled to the far end of the ridge, which was sign enough. If there was a crevice, one of those cloud-hopping sheep was sure to have been there sometime.

"Well, you've done it this time!" Lacey grumbled with gloomy satisfaction. "You've got us swinging at the top of the world with no way to get down. We will thirst ourselves weak and then get massacred, and we'll all win a medal when we're gone to our eternal glory!"

"You are getting fidgety as a damned infantryman!" Ambrose barked. "What's wrong with going down here?"

Lacey stared at the sheer wall beneath his feet. It was a wash that had indented the ridge. Countless rains and winds had scoured out a sandstone slide as smooth as cement and steeper than an Alpine roof. "Ye're gone berserk with mountain fever!" the corporal said.

"Nothing but talk!" Ambrose rasped. "Will you get movin', or must I send you skiddin' down there on yer backside?"

Allowing for the angle, the drop was, he judged, about a hundred feet. With nine picket ropes, they could just make it. He let Lacey down first, using a loop under his buttocks with his heels gouging hard against the wall. The length just made ground, which meant that with a horse it was going to be about three feet short . . . if the horse didn't twist loose or snap the line and plummet on his head!

Ambrose let down two more men, and the quivering of their bodies when they hit the ground showed the affect of altitude and strain. He skidded the first horse down with a loop caught under its flanks and brought up beneath with a runner through its bridle to hold its head in line.

The horse backed down, trembling with fright. One slip of its hind legs and the loop would zip out from under it. One panicked pitch of its head, and it would loop over backwards, and roll out of balance. The ropes were strong, but not meant to hold against dead weight. Watching the horse slide toward them, Lacey could recall no Sioux skirmish or ambush as harrowing.

He let go a blast of breath as the animal's hind hoofs touched the bottom, then realized with an epic string of profanity that the worst was yet to come. The animal's weight was pulling against the loop so there was no way to slip it without untying the knot. That meant shouldering each frenzied and quivering animal upright while he got under it and worked at the square hitch.

At the end of two hours, the horses and all of the men but Ambrose stood upon the floor of the chute. Wiping sweat clear of his eyes, Lacey looked up and rasped, "Now, he is stuck up there or must come down and leave our ropes, and I hope the Sioux catch him while he's figuring it out!"

There was a good deal more to this than the matter of losing government equipment. Before they got out of the mountains they would almost certainly have vital need of their picket ropes again.

They watched Ambrose move around

the rim perplexedly, and finally come over the side and let himself down hand over hand. Midway he paused for rest with boots braced against the side. But the strength to hold there was not in either his arms or legs, and a leg gave and banged him violently against the wall. He skidded a yard and caught, but it was a drain on his strength and a hurt, and they saw the wince and sudden pallor of his face.

"Serves him right!" Lacey said, but his eyes were riveted upon the sergeant's fight. After a space he said quietly, "Get three saddle blankets, boys. On the double."

They squared them and stood with them forming a landing net. Ambrose stopped at thirty-five feet, and again at thirty, and again, almost immediately beneath. Touching the rope, Lacey could feel the heave of the sergeant's tortured lungs and the throb of his quivering muscles.

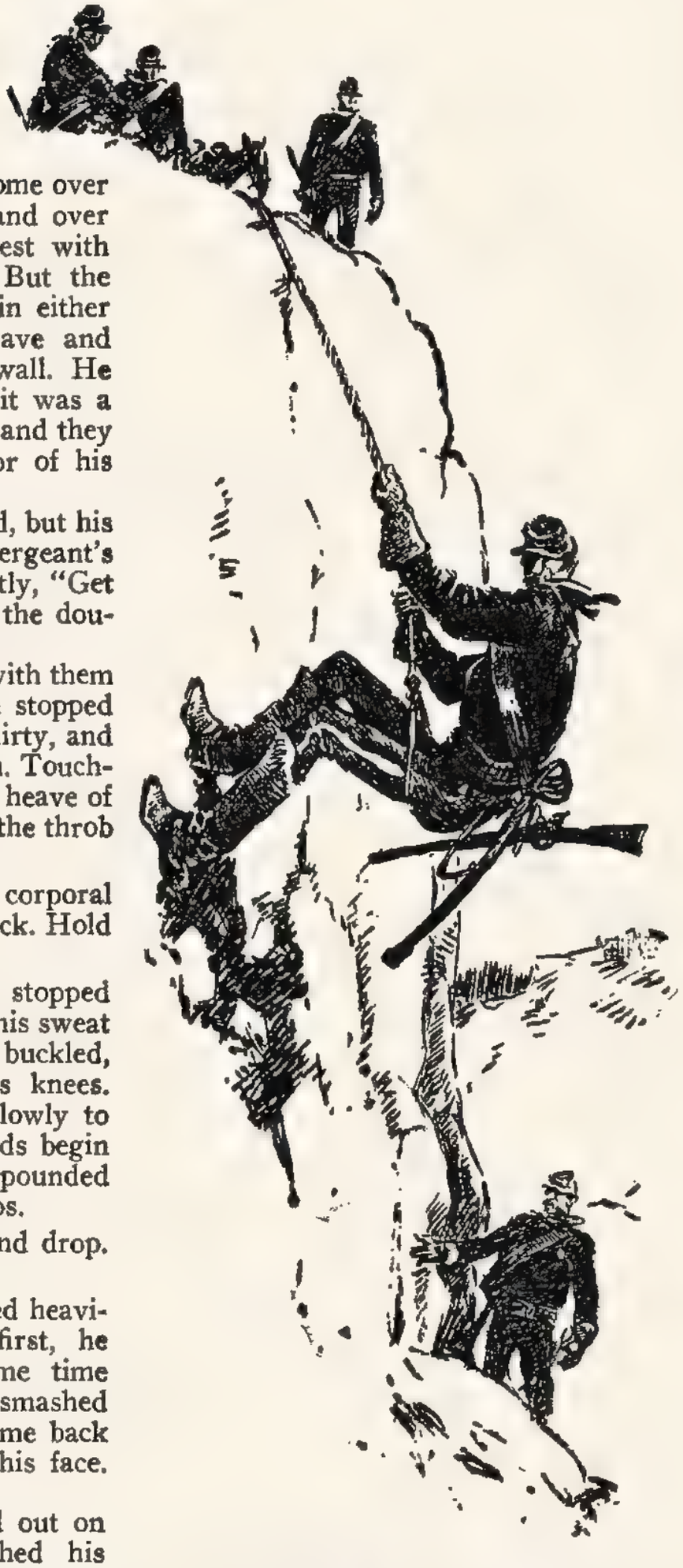
"He is a heavy man," the corporal mumbled, "and will land like a rock. Hold steady."

At twenty-five feet, Ambrose stopped to rest again and the hot drops of his sweat came down like rain. His legs buckled, leaving him hanging against his knees. They saw his arms pulled out slowly to full-length overhead, and his hands begin to slip. The sound of his breath pounded down on them in great, torn gasps.

"Let go," Lacey called up, "and drop. Relax."

The sergeant let go and dropped heavily. Hitting the blankets feet first, he ripped through, but at the same time bounced. He bounced hard and smashed his nose against the wall, and came back down with blood spurting from his face.

LACEY had him laid out on the ground and bathed his hands and knees and face with most of what water they had left. He rubbed bear grease from a can into the raw flesh, treating him as gently as a woman with his big calloused hands. But when Ambrose sat up, Lacey



Allowing for the angle, the drop was about a hundred feet. With nine picket ropes, they could just make it.

said disgustedly, "It is too bad we did not let you land upon the flooring! You ripped three good blankets, you big ox. Why do you think I told you to relax?"

Ambrose felt of his nose and scowled. "Why didn't you come up after me?" he rasped.

He got up and the strain upon him was clear in the tight pull and the pallor of his face. He grabbed the end of the rope and gave it a few whirling snaps, and they watched the loops travel upward, and unsnap the knotted top. It came down, bringing a small rock the size of a fist.

Lacey watched this procedure with perplexity, knowing there had only been one rock near the rim-top and that not of a nature to crotch a rope. He moved over and picked up the small rock, examining the edge of it and finding it mashed with play against a bigger stone. He threw Ambrose a glance of grudging respect.

"You mean you used this for a lock-rock?" he demanded.

"What else?" the sergeant grunted.

"Only an absolute idjit would trust his weight to that!" Lacey stated with conviction. "Now you know the kind of sergeant we've got, buckos . . . a simpleton!"

Ambrose made noises in his throat; he was too spent to hand out the fist that was his inclination. The weight of the horses had played hob with the knots. They spent a half hour cursing and ripping their fingers raw getting their picket lines apart again.

They followed a drybed out of the wash, riding low beneath the rim until they had twisted across behind a row of upthrown hills. In late morning they stopped for their first blow, and climbing a gullied hill with Lacey, Ambrose cut for sign upon the ridge. He looked a long time, and then turned with a tough grin. "That is a pinto tethered to them alders, and no rock!"

"I have been looking at that," Lacey said, "for a whole ten minutes. Nobody but a thickheaded Dutchman could get into so much trouble and fall out!"

"Brains," Ambrose stated. His corporal snorted.

They bellied back and went back to their horses, and felt the strike of the sun upon them like a hot knife. They cut fresh sign, and followed the tracks until they spread out like a fan on all sides. Ambrose lifted his arm to halt, and considered grimly, "That is a party posted out for scout. Just in case we got loose and headed this way."

He looked back, and coming to a decision, shook his head. "We can't go back," he said. "And we can't stay here." He narrowed his eyes at a shaft of blinding glare breaking down the hollow from a mica-desert. "I guess that is our trail."

"It is six miles across there," Lacey said. "And that floor is like the lid of hell!"

"It is better," Ambrose stated, "than toasting atop a Sioux griddle."

They moved down the gully, and at the edge of the desert felt the solid impact of the heat. They were a good nine thousand feet, with their hearts tripping from the rare air, but it did nothing to kill the heat and glare of the desert when the sun was strong. He stopped and ran his tongue across his lips and stared out into the glittering bronze flames licking up into the hot and solid wall of heat.

He said, "All right, off man afoot and take a stirrup," and dismounting himself, whacked his horse and stumbled along beside.

In minutes, the haze gobbled them. Their feet were blistering and the heat pressed in burning on their lungs. The floor was uneven, but there was no perspective in the glare, and the men and horses stumbled as they moved along. The dust stirred up, choking and saturating them like liquid, eating raw lines along their sweat creases. At intervals, the men shifted from foot to saddle, but the animals were slowing, their eyes glazed dull, their strength ebbing.

On open prairie you figured four miles an hour alternating foot and saddle. Up here, it took them three hours and a half to cross. They fought their way upgrade and came out of heat as suddenly as from a sea onto a beach. They threw themselves to the ground, dead weary, sucking for air that no longer scorched their lungs. Their muscles felt beaten and their flesh was burned black and cracking.

Ambrose looked them over, and grated harshly, "Why, yer a fine looking pack of bums! Lacey, yer big platter mouth is spread over yer whole face!"

The corporal's eyes fired angrily and then suddenly he broke out a harsh, dust-choked laugh. "You should see that big Dutch schnozzle of yer own!"

THE men pulled themselves half up and grinned with varying humor and derision, but there was not much humor left; they were dead spent. Their strength was gone, their muscles one throbbing dried-out ache. Their hearts were hammering, and there was a buzzing in their heads. They needed water and rest and hot food and a good night's sleep, and considering their needs against their chances, Ambrose thought they could not have any of them. There was one last spring this side of the High Pass, but it lay around a shoulder of the mountain that might be swarming with Sioux.

He gave orders for a small drink, and one for their horses, which left their canteens stripped. The sun was dropping perpendicularly beyond the gold and azure peaks, and its oblique rays glinted off a tongue of glacier almost right beside them. He said, "I am damned if I know why a man ever joins the cavalry" and gave them fifteen minutes more, and then signaled them to saddles.

The heat of day lifted with great pulsing breaths. The cool gave fresh strength and vigor to their bodies, but soon they would be cursing it. They moved across a grassed and brushed land filled with treacherous rain cracks, and hit a steady grade that grew precipitous. At sundown they stopped to blow at the last fringe of brush. Towering over them was a world of solid ice and rock.

They ate cold jerky, which was the best they could hope. With the sun's last oblique gold and crimson light upon them, they looked back to where night had already fallen in the valley. They saw fire signals at the edge of the desert where they had crossed, and shortly, saw signal smokes start up on the rim of a high bluff opposite.

Ambrose watched with grim belligerence in his eyes. He said, "They are signaling back down onto this side for a party to head us off. They'll be racing up that next gulch, trying to beat us to the Pass."

The blistered and bearded men looked at him with strained faces. In their minds they weighed their chances against demanding a decent hour's rest. There was a point at which the human body was numb to the threat of danger, and they had very nearly reached it.

The sergeant saw it, and his jaw set, and Lacey saw it, and growled, "Well, the Injuns will not catch us at the Pass. Our sergeant's going to have us dead first instead!"

There were no grins, but it put the weight of grim humor in the balance. The men moved stiffly, and came to their feet, and started along the trail that reached above them like a thread. With the sun's disappearance, chill struck against them like a knife. The cold drifted off the glacier, spread over the ridge and moved down upon them in a steady wave.

They climbed at a stiff angle, their breath whistling with the altitude, their minds in a fuzzy, pain-racked blank. Ambrose had known vaguely for a long time that his horse was stumbling and sliding before he realized they had come onto a field of barren rock and shale.

He called a halt, and the men dropped down from their horses, and massing together like a herd of cattle, slept almost as they stood. He had to give Lacey a shaking and boot Swan and Rider hard to make them strip off blankets. He went and leaned against a rock and took a chew, not daring to sit down while he mounted guard. He watched the moon's glow brighten beyond the pass. At the first edging of solid silver, he kicked Hanrahan awake, and sank into stupor himself.

There had been four guards of a half hour each when Lacey shook him violently. He battled out of dead sleep, shaking his head like a bull. He bent his head forward and down and pressed hard at the nerves at the base of his neck. He lifted his head with a fierce blown breath and then jumped to his feet and felt the deadness leave him. It was damned cold and he realized his teeth were chattering.

Lacey said, "There's sound below."

They walked beyond the fringe of reverberation from the men's hard breathing, and stood upon a ledge listening intently. There was a low hogback which it was not possible to cross, but barest sounds came intermittently up across its

surface. Twice there was a sound of rolling stones, and once a heavy sound, as if a horse had fallen.

He was thoroughly awake now and his mind worked rapidly. Three sounds in that short time suggested a large party. Not every horse kicked a rock rolling every half mile. He waited silently but heard nothing more and finally drew back from the edge. "I'd say two hours behind if they were on this trail."

"My guess," Lacey nodded. "I don't know that gulch but it is steeper. Maybe we're got three."

"It is not too much," Ambrose grunted, and they set to shaking and kicking the men awake. The stone field looked precariously steep of pitch in the bright silver light. They charged it, leaning against the grade. On the second switch back, they felt their animals begin to peter out, and got down to lead. They had to beat and pull their horses the last three miles.

THEY entered the Pass and stopped to blow, and they looked like gaunt specters from hell in the shifting silver light. Men and horses were about done in. They needed at least an hour's rest desperately. But dawn lay beyond the Pass in a pearl gray mist, and it was important not to be caught silhouetted against the sky.

They stumbled through, floundering, falling, cursing, crying with fatigue and half-crazed from the rare air. They stumbled out into the first warmth of the sun, and looked down upon the zigzag of the trail, and their mouths were thick as cotton with a mad thirst.

Ambrose said, "We have got to hit brush before the Sioux come up behind. There is a spring just at timber line, boys; keep your minds on that."

He started down, stumbling in a half-daze. At brush line, the grade eased and his horse began to find its balance. An hour below, he got back in the saddle. From desert and rock, his boots had gone clean through. He looked around at his men once, and saw the fierce burning and the hollows around their eyes, and knew the signs. They were dead beat. He kept hold of his pommel and set his teeth, and kept his gaze ahead.

The sun was striking at them with real heat when he looked back at the Pass and saw those damnable signal fires put their smoke plumes toward the clouds. He had hoped they would have no means of making fire, but they had carried tinder.

He gave a hoarse grunt for Lacey and barked from a swollen throat, "That will draw an ambush below. At the spring."

Lacey answered, cracked and raw of voice, "The horses have got to have water. The boys can't last much longer either."

"I'll ride ahead and draw them off," the sergeant said. "Ride in fast and water up and then cut down that gulch and meet me at the end."

He rode ahead and they watched him round the corner above timber. They were at the corner when they heard the first distance-dimmed shot and the hoarse, savage yells. There were two more shots and then the drumming of running hoofs.

Lacey growled over his shoulder, "Come along, and make it fast!" Riding in on the spring he had his canteen ready as his horse dropped its head to drink.

They watered and turned down the gulch at a dangerous stride. The gray shadows reached at them and the silence mocked their hurried sounds. Abruptly, the sound of scattered firing trailed up dimly from beneath. They hit the floor and the sounds came stronger. Riding from the mouth they saw Ambrose holed up in a boulder nest holding off ten braves. He had taken position so that the Sioux were at an angle. They were not conscious of the others until the fusillade of fire smashed into them, and one Sioux pitched.

The others broke in their circling and milled, and foolishly emptied their few guns at Lacey's crowd. Ambrose ripped out a savage yell and cried, "Charge!" Sabers gleamed and they struck the undecided Indians with cold steel. There was a milling and moil of dust, thick with yells and shouts. Then six Indians broke free and raced back into timber.

Ambrose staggered out from the rocks, hit in four places but only grazed. His knees buckled under him and he sat hard upon the ground. Putting a canteen to his lips, Lacey growled, "Just a damned pantywaist for a sergeant!"

Ambrose took a long full drink, and

wiped the back of a hairy hand across his lips. "Who'd they get?"

"Nobody," Lacey grunted. "Swan and Rayburn are knifed up a bit. You hurt?"

"Hell, no!" Ambrose growled, and took another drink. "We're still twelve miles from trail and we're going to have one devil of a ride for it!"

He got to his feet, and tending his horse, climbed back into the saddle. He put his horse into a steady jog, and held it to the pace. They hit the Bozeman and then the Clearwater. Looking back, they saw streamers of dust hanging every which way across the mountain.

Ambrose gave a tough grin through the enormous burden of weariness he felt. He said. "There'll be a patrol along in an hour. Strip down and let yer bony carcasses soak up some of that water."

Swan was the first to have enough and climbing the bank demanded, "You don't figure to make us shave?"

"Hell, no!" Ambrose grunted back. "Where d'ya think we're going, to a dress parade?"

THE bath freshened them, taking the worst of the ache and strain from their bodies. At three o'clock the patrol rode by, and joining the detachment, they rode on in. Ambrose brought his men to a halt before officers' stoop where Captain Graham was having a cool drink with Maxwell.

Ambrose saluted with his casual, slightly truculent manner and then spat. "Scout reporting Cloud Peak circle, Captain. Sioux are making a gather through the center valley to come out this side of Fort Smith. There'd be, I'd guess, about two hundred warriors."

Graham looked at him, at the lines drawn like webs from the corners of his mouth and eyes, at the gauntness of his bearded face, and the stiffness of his hands, at his boots. "What else?"

"Nothing but in line of duty. Little skirmish and four Sioux dead." He could not hold his enormous yawn. Then he said, "Wasn't much hunting, Captain."

Graham answered his casual salute and watched the squad ride back toward stables. From the signs he had seen, his experience filled in the details. He could almost have drawn a precise map.

Vaguely, Maxwell's irritated tone floated through his thoughts. "On my word, George, you've let them get all out of hand! A week for a fifty mile circle, and a report they could make from riding along the Bozeman Trail! From the looks of them, I'd risk they've been holed up on a good drunk."

"Maybe you're right, Max," Graham said without disturbance. "We get pretty lax at these frontier posts."

PARDON MY POISON PLATTERS

By Fergus Truslow

Ex-GI Wade's record factory was strictly legit . . . until he saw the shapely nylons under the workbench—and his partner drank a cyanide cocktail.

Plus "Death's Glass Slipper" by Robert Martin and other exciting novelettes and shorts in the May issue—on sale now!

BLACK MASK

MEETING ON THE ICE

By JIM KJELGAARD

JOHN DONNELLY had not forgotten Nactoo, the Eskimo, and Walters, his white companion. But he did not think of them constantly, because he could think of little except himself.

He walked with a shuffling tread, and his head was bent towards the ice over which he travelled. Blowing out of the ice pack, the wind beat against his back. Donnelly hunched his shoulders together, as though to ward off the bitter wind that was blowing right through his caribou-skin clothing and into his flesh.

He seemed to have forgotten the time when he was a man, walking with two other men towards a polar island whereon Walters had been positive that they would find a great deposit of uranium. To John Donnelly that was another world and another life, one so different from this that he had difficulty recalling exactly what had taken place. He knitted his brows because he could not remember, and devoted concentrated effort to reconstructing the chain of events which had brought him here. The picture he conceived was only a hazy and a partial one.

He had been loitering about a trading

When the bear launched his charge, the man jerked his rifle to his hip, and shot.

ILLUSTRATED BY DANIEL PIERCE

post, waiting for what might turn up, when Walters told him of the island and its wealth. Intrigued, Donnelly had immediately declared his willingness to help re-locate it, and he had had enough money to buy a dog team and supplies as well as to hire Nactoo. Donnelly remembered that much quite clearly.

The rest was a vague dream, a distorted nightmare of which he could piece together only parts. Following Walters' compass course, he, Walters, and Nactoo had travelled for many days over the ice pack. Then . . .

Donnelly frowned. All that he understood perfectly was a great hunger, and a mighty gnawing in the pit of his stomach. There were still times when he seemed to be transported out onto the ice pack. Dimly he remembered dropping behind Walters, Nactoo, and the running dogs, to tighten a loose sight on his rifle. Starting out on the trail of his companions, he had come upon suddenly-broken ice, and this was one of the parts he couldn't seem to forget.

Nactoo and the sledge and dogs were gone, but Walters was clinging desperately to the edge of the ice. He was looking straight at Donnelly, and shouting something which Donnelly could not hear above the roaring wind, but Walters' pleading face spoke for itself. Then more ice crumbled and Walters disappeared with it.

It had all happened in less than five seconds, Donnelly told himself, and he had tried his best to rescue Walters. But he knew that Walters had clung to the ice for more than three minutes, and Donnelly might have rescued him had he dared try. He had let Walters die.

That memory was no longer so torturing, or anything save an uncomfortable background thought, because now Donnelly seemed unable to think clearly of anything save the food cache they had left on Cape Moon. He *could* reach it, he told himself. Donnelly checked his compass, and swung the rifle from his right hand to his left. All he had to do, he told himself again, was keep going. He would not be one of those fools who brought about their own death because they were afraid to fight a little harder.

A great surge of confidence crept over him. He knew his compass, and compasses do not fail. Not once, he was certain, had he varied the minutest portion of a degree from the course that would take him straight to the life-saving food. In fact, he must be very near it right now; he had been walking for many days.

Some of the weariness faded from Donnelly's smile.

MORE than two months ago the old polar bear had started a journey over the ice pack. He had no special purpose in mind and no particular destination; he was simply impelled by a restlessness that would not let him be still. He had to wander because he was a polar bear and because he had grown weary of his old haunts.

He set an aimless course, sometimes travelling straight for two or three days and at other times doubling back on the way he had come. When he was hungry, the old bear killed and ate one of the numberless seals that basked on the ice flanking open leads. It was good and easy hunting and the old bear had grown fat.

Now he was so gaunt that his belly skin hung in great sagging folds, and he was very surly for the good hunting had run out. Many days had passed since the old bear was able to kill and eat a seal. He had stalked the last, a single seal lying alone, at the edge of a narrow lead. After eating his fill he had slept. Rising, the old bear walked on in the direction he wished to go.

So doing, he ventured onto thick ice where there were no open leads. There were seals, but they lay beneath the ice and breathed only through gnawed holes. The old polar bear could not catch them.

On the third day he turned back to the frozen remnants of the last seal he had killed, and ate the stone-hard skin, bones, and flesh. For a moment, after eating, the bear sat like a great dog on the ice and let his huge head droop so that his nose touched the few remaining shreds of seal. Then, because he was still determined to go east, he swung again in that direction.

He knew that he could not catch seals, and therefore that he could not eat, in

that area of thick ice which lay immediately ahead of him. But the old bear had crossed many such barren stretches without ever having to go hungry for a dangerous length of time. He was certain that he would find food before very long.

There was still little except thick ice; the old bear travelled for three days before he ran across an open lead with seals basking at its edges. The old bear flattened himself on the ice, pushing himself along with his hind paws and pulling with his front ones. For all his twelve hundred pounds he made no noise, and his yellow-white fur blended so perfectly with the ice that he was almost invisible. Certain of a kill, the old bear slid forward.

He would have killed had he not made an error. All his attention was fastened on a fat seal at the edge of the lead, and he ignored entirely an ice hummock near it. Lying behind that hummock, a seal that the bear did not see saw the bear as it passed. The seal splashed into the water. Alarmed, the rest of the seals wriggled from the ice into the open lead and dived deeply.

The old bear stood up, working his jaws angrily and glaring his frustration. He should have eaten here, and the fact that he had not been able to do so whetted his already-keen edge of hunger.

The old bear went on, quartering back and forth over the ice and trying to find another open lead. There were none, and the scent of untouchable seals at their breathing holes was maddening. The old bear's increasing hunger infuriated him, and fury mounted to consuming rage.

He stopped suddenly, snuffling into the wind and reading with his nose the scent it carried. The old bear shuffled nervous feet, and swung his head to look behind him. He turned again to face into the wind.

The wind brought man scent to him, and the old bear still carried in his side an imbedded slug which was an always-present reminder of what men could do. They were mightier than he, and had he been well-fed the old bear would have run. Now he did not feel like running, for he was desperately hungry.

Slowly, exercising all his craft and cunning, the old bear began to stalk John Donnelly.

DESPITE his efforts to achieve one, John Donnelly still had no constantly-clear picture of just what had happened. He knew only what was about to happen, and everything hinged on the fact that he was walking towards the food cache on Cape Moon. He was positive that he was doing so because he constantly checked his course with his compass, and compasses do not lie.

But the obsession which gripped him was not completely overwhelming. Most of the time it held him, but sometimes it relaxed to let him think of other things. It was at such times that he thought of Nactoo, and of Walters clinging to the edge of the ice. When these thoughts recurred they were so real and near that Donnelly seemed to be re-living the actual experiences, and he screamed aloud. He had made no effort to save Walters and, in spite of his self-assurances that he could have done nothing, he knew otherwise. Thought of the food cache always crowded these nightmares from his mind.

He knew that he had to be very near the cache, but he could not be certain of how near. Always he tried to force from his mind the shadow of what might happen should he not be near enough. He tried to think of other things which he might be doing.

He knew something of arctic hunting, and he was sure that there was a method of taking seals from beneath the ice, but whoever attempted such a feat must have a dog and he had none. The notion that only lack of a dog stood between himself and life was an aggravating one, but he could do nothing about it. There was just no way of getting a dog.

He must try to think. Other men had been caught on the ice pack far from food or any source of food, and they had survived. They knew ways to procure something to eat, at least enough to keep them alive until they could get to a cache. John Donnelly could think of nothing.

He knew a moment of great depression. He had walked for very many days—how many he did not know—and all that time

he had eaten nothing. Perhaps he was only deluding himself and would not find the cache. Maybe, when he became weak enough, he would simply fall down on the ice and freeze. The thought was a strange and morbidly fascinating one. But somehow there seemed to be no real connection between such a possibility and himself. Other men might be overtaken by that fate but surely he never would.

He turned around, and the corners of his eyes wrinkled as he studied the hummocks and pressure ridges through which he had come. He tried to think clearly about what he had done, and could think only of the food cache on Cape Moon. John Donnelly stared at something which had not been there before.

It looked like ice, but it was not ice. The wind ruffled it, and wind did not move ice hummocks. The curious thought occurred to Donnelly that he was looking at a polar bear, and at the same time he had the even more curious sensation that the bear was hunting him. The bear, too, must be hungry.

As slowly and as carefully as he could, John Donnelly raised his rifle. However, he no longer seemed able to control it. The sights blurred. The barrel wavered, and when he looked again the bear was gone.

For a moment he stood bewilderedly, anxiously holding the rifle and staring at the place where the big bear had been. Then he realized the opportunity he had missed and a sob broke from him.

John Donnelly choked it back, and hope replaced despair. The notion that the bear was hunting him strengthened. Perhaps he could be persuaded to return. John Donnelly weaved among the hummocks, holding his rifle ready.

He knew that he must have this bear if he was going to live. John Donnelly climbed to the top of a snow-covered heap and looked all about. He could see over the tops of the hummocks and ridges, and the snow-covered level expanse which lay beyond them. This was a good place to stay. He could see the bear if it moved.

THE OLD polar bear was almost ready to rush his victim when the man looked around. Without thought, acting only upon sure knowledge that the rifle was deadly, the bear glided behind a ridge and slipped away.

He went neither far nor fast, for great hunger still ached in his belly and, since nothing else was available, he knew that he must have this man to eat if he would survive. However he had to get him by stealth and take no chances with the rifle.

As soon as he was certain that the man could no longer see him, the old bear slunk back. He came cautiously, testing the wind with every step and verifying with his nose the man's exact location.

Step by step, always shielding and never revealing himself, the old bear crept along parallel to the man's trail. When the right second came he would rush.

The man had climbed and was standing upon a snow-covered hump that was separated from and higher than the ice hummocks and ridges.

The hump stood alone, with ten yards separating it from the nearest ice hummock. The man on top held his rifle ready, but he was staring hard in the opposite direction and his back was to the bear. Slowly, staying behind hummocks until he was almost within the exposed ten yards leading to the hump, the bear stalked forward. He gathered himself for the swift rush that would take him across those ten yards and up the hump.

The bear launched his charge.

He was within feet of the snow-covered hump when the man turned, jerked his rifle to his hip, and shot. The bear felt the terrific impact of the slug, and its burning course into his body. He faltered, but he did not stop or even slow his pace. The old bear struck once.

The man collapsed like a fire-seared plant, and he did not move again. For a moment the old bear stood on weakening legs which, mysteriously, refused to do his bidding any more. Like a slowly-deflating balloon, the bear melted down beside the man he had killed.

That night a heavy snow covered the hump, and made it just another mound forever lost in the vastness of the arctic. But before the arctic cold got in its freezing work, body heat from the two things that lay on the hump melted the snow beneath them. Side by side, they lay on the tarpaulin that covered the food cache at Cape Moon.

THE CAMP-FIRE

Where Readers, Writers and Adventurers Meet

THREE very welcome newcomers to the ranks of the Writers' Brigade this month. First, we want to introduce Arthur S. Riggs, whose byline should have appeared in these pages long before now—for Commander Riggs' career has been every bit as adventurous in its way as that of the swashbuckling hero of his exciting novelette—"The Sword of Captain Duardo"—which gets this issue off to a rousing start.

From *Who's Who* we learn that Arthur Stanley Riggs is a retired commander in the U. S. Naval Reserve with a long and colorful experience at sea. A former newspaperman and editor, he is a specialist in Italian medieval history, and the author of many historical books and articles. He was awarded the rank of Officer of the Crown of Italy by the late King Vittorio Emmanuele, and decorated Knight Commander, Royal Order of Isabel the Catholic (Spain); he served in the Spanish-American War and World War I—and in World War II acted as Librarian of the Office of Cable Censorship and was awarded a special letter of commendation by the Secretary of the Navy for outstanding performance of duty.

Commander Riggs writes that he has just returned from a flying trip to Panama—"Navy flew me down, Air Force brought me back"—and we gather that he is a very busy man indeed. But we're mighty glad he found time to write "The Sword of Captain Duardo." In our opinion, it's one whale of an adventure yarn! But let's let him speak for himself—

> I suppose that I am one of the oldest men you have ever graciously admitted to the charmed circle of the *Camp-Fire*. That makes me feel pretty humble in asking admittance to a group of lusty young buckos to whom a man of seventy must seem a true

old-timer. But I, too, have had my share of adventuring in various places and been mixed up (legally and otherwise) with four wars, tried out the tropics, been shot down in the trenches in 1918, and have just flown to Panama and back despite my dislike of any but water transportation. I have never shot a tiger, but I once got entangled with a giant ray and was towed all over Manila Bay for hours until some soldiers shot the brute for me. I should have shot the Filipino boatman who harpooned the monster and then had no axe to cut him loose.

My specialty in recent years has been the study of interoceanic waterways or canals, especially the Panama Canal, on which I have already done five articles, three of which have been reprinted in full in the Congressional Record as documents of national importance. My lifelong interests, however, have been history and the Navy. In 1898 I was an enlisted man in the Fleet; an observer attached to the British, French and Belgian Armies in World War I; and during the last fracas was Chief Librarian of the Office of Cable Censorship, with additional duty as Information Officer. This was one of those headache jobs nobody wanted but somebody had to do, and do right.. It took a lot out of me, especially as I was eager to get back to sea, where I had a lot of non-naval experience, some in sail.

The story in this issue of *Adventure* is a curious by-product of a big historical job I undertook some years ago. No one had included between two covers the astonishing story of the rise and development, and then the crash of four of the great Italian maritime republics between the fifth and the eighteenth centuries as being the real foundation of the Italian Renaissance, and so of importance in world history. The research and slow collation of facts took many years. In the course of it I ran into one very curious statement about a citizen of one of the republics who was captured by a pirate and sold, not for a good price as a sturdy galley slave, but for a mere lot of onions. That was too rich a hint to forget, so I filed the reference and data, and eventually Messer Duardo emerged like Topsy, full grown. The curious feature of the rivalry between the states of Amalfi, Pisa, Genoa and Venice was that they hated each other and fought each other quite as cheerily as they did the Saracens, and, being good traders even before they were good Christians, they traded serenely with the enemy whenever they could make a deal, notwithstanding the threat of the Pope to excommunicate anybody caught selling the Saracens anything that could be used against the so-called Christian nations. Perhaps after Messer Duardo gets back from his present Crusade, maybe too much disabled to do any real fighting again, we may be able to involve him in some devious trades and find out what it means to have an expert "kiss the feet"—bastinado to you who have never seen its results. I did, just once. Which reminds me that recently in the little town of Chorrera, in Panama, I heard of an Indian trick practiced on the Spaniards in the early seventeenth century. The Indians caught some Spaniards, and because the whites had been so crazy about gold, tortured them unmercifully and finally killed them by "giving them gold freely"—lots of it, melted and poured into their their veins.

Gentlemen, your pardon. I talk too damn much.

E. H. TOUSSAINT, who contributes the moving story of a great-hearted dog and his beloved master in "The Reunion"—see page 70—steps up to the *Camp-Fire* with the following introduction—

I was born a reasonably long time ago at Barryville, New York, which is a community so small you can't find it on most maps, right along the New York-Pennsylvania border. There was a tradition in that area that if once a youngster wet his feet in the Delaware River he would eventually return to spend the balance of his days there. I fell in at an early age and perhaps that is why I eventually came to live in Philadelphia which is on the Delaware River. The journey from one place to the other, however, was rather long and very devious.

I received my Grammar School and High School education at Matteawan and Fishkill-on-Hudson, New York (now officially named Beacon, New York). This happens to be the same Grammar School which J. V. Forrestal attended, and he and I were in the same classes—not that that makes any difference because it is reasonable to assume he has forgotten even my name by this time.

I enlisted in the Army shortly before the outbreak of World War I, and having been so fortunate as to come through a good part of that war without getting very badly damaged, I was sent to the training school for Artillery Officers at Samur, France, where the French Instructor Staff, while teaching us the latest techniques in artillery fire direction and control, also seemingly tried to kill us off by teaching us to ride horses over hurdles and down dirt slides without benefit of reins or stirrups. After graduating from there I finished out the war with the feeling that nothing much could happen to me that hadn't happened already.

In the years between 1919 and the present I have managed to complete my education and have earned a living in the professions of Sales Management and Market and Sales Research. This type of work requires extensive travel and, although this is interesting for a reasonable number of years, it eventually acquires the monotonous characteristics of a trolley or subway trip.

A couple of years ago, being fiftyish, it dawned upon me that for thrills I was calling on the memories of a life which has led me into some unusual spots and some inter-

esting situations. At about the same time I became rather acutely conscious of the economic pressure exerted by a twelve year old daughter, a wife, the income tax, and the high cost of living. That's when it occurred to me that I might give myself an excuse to dwell upon memories by writing of some of them, and at the same time acquire a little of the extra wherewithal to pay the costs of said daughter, wife, income tax and the h. c. l.

Incidentally, the writing process fills in very pleasantly many long hours spent on overland trains and in hotels.

As to the background on how this particular story came to be written: It is somewhat in the nature of a tribute to the best of the many Doberman Pinschers I have known and owned. The appearance and the character of the dog in the story are those of my own Gerd von Reyno who passed to his reward some seven years ago. The plot is a combining and dressing up of several separate incidents. For the authentic detail of the old-time German police training methods, I am indebted to William Necker of Libertyville, Illinois, the famous trainer of these dogs. As a close friend he told me much of the history, the romance and the lore of this breed—and he did a wonderful job of training my intelligent dog and his dumb owner to work together.

AND Thomas Gilchrist, whose unusual tale of a man who lived and suffered under the spell of a Madagascan curse—"The Scarf of O'Shane"—appears on page 79, gives us a bit of background on himself and explains how he happened to write the yarn—

From bonnie Scotland to sea as a brass-pounder at 15. Master's ticket at 25, command at 35. At 30, broke away from British ships, sailed Australian, U. S. and Canadian ships thereafter, with periods ashore as (1) café proprietor, which persuaded me I was no businessman, (2) free-lancing, mainly radio plays and talks aired in Australia and since in Canada, (3) Chief Nautical Instructor to Ship & Gun Crew Command No. 1, U. S. Army in Australia. This last during time off from my jaunt with MacArthur from Sydney to Tokyo in command of U. S. Army Transports. The war was over before I dined with some of MacArthur's generals at the Imperial.

Writing: Under the friendly guidance of the late Dick Wetjen and Captain A. E. Dingle, I puttered about for a number of years selling fiction in British and Australian markets; and I was translated to the Danish and German. I became a writer by inclination and a sailor of necessity, for I wrote stories to establish myself ashore and then found I had to go back to sea to write the stories. On my odd excursions into the New York fiction world, however, I foundered lamentably until, a year ago, I got the right sailing directions and a good pilot.

One Captain Gow, whom I knew years ago as a ship surveyor in Seattle, is responsible for "The Scarf of O'Shane." The old man would reminisce by the hour and he spun the yarn that makes the climax of my story. He had actually experienced the illusion, though not, of course, with such serious consequences. I had been to Madagascar and I had seen things . . . and heard things. So I handed them to an Irishman who would make the most of them. This one is a no-good sonovagun and unworthy of the Ould Country—but I hope you like the story.

"Ireland Must Be Heaven 'Cause The Monon Don't Go There"

35c Per Copy
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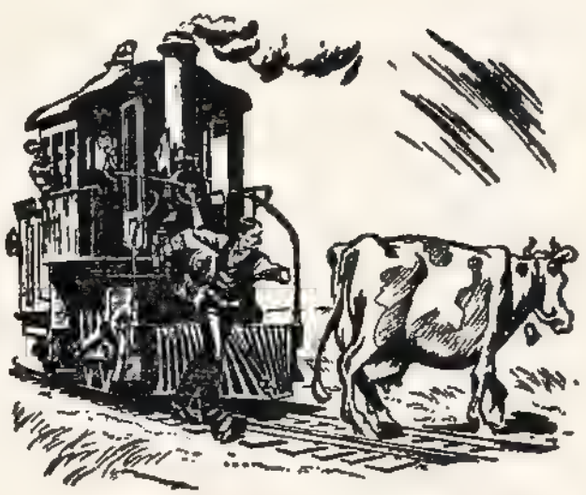


—was good for a laugh in any Indiana comedy act until vaudeville went out—and nearly took the Monon with it. How a dynamic young Texan named John Barriger is streamlining this once defunct, cow-pasture railroad, and making it pay off, is just one of the many exciting feature stories in the big May issue of RAILROAD, now on your newsstand. Don't miss it!

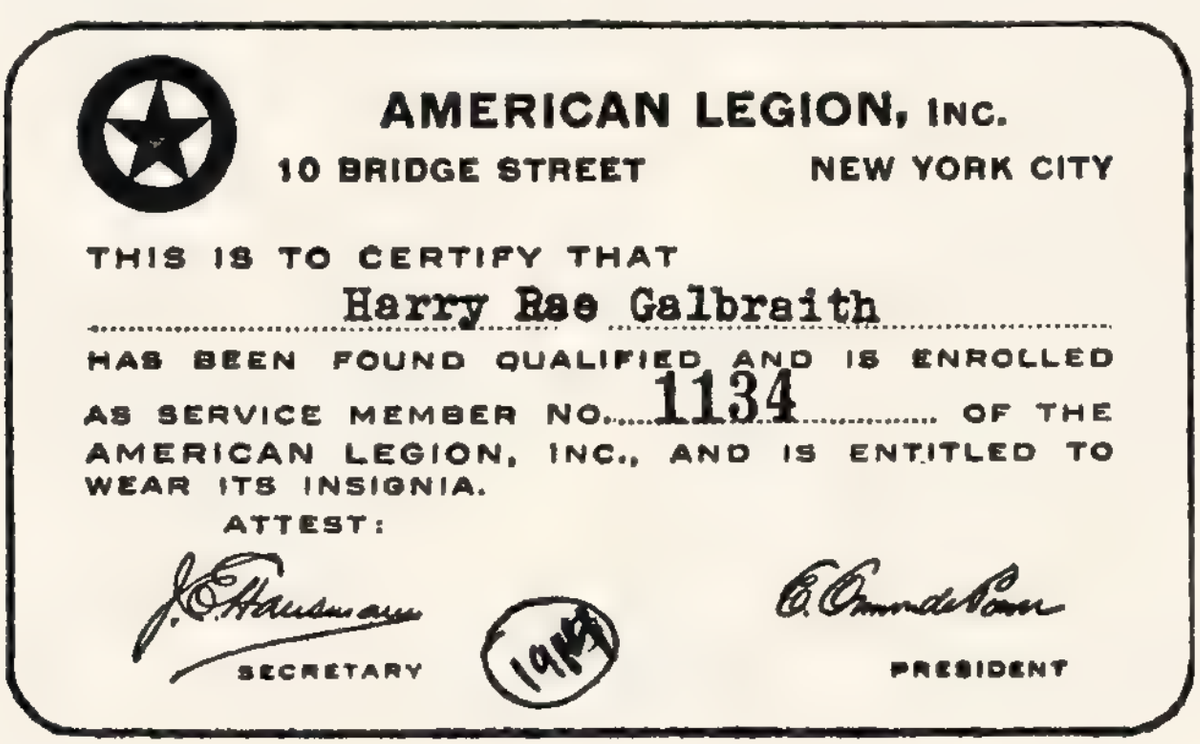
RAILROAD
MAGAZINE

205 E. 42nd St., New York City 17

HERE'S an item which we thought was well worth inclusion in *Camp-Fire*—the story of the American Legion—not the one we all know, but the original Legion, an organization sponsored by *Adventure* 'way back in 1914. It was brought to our attention recently by Legionnaire Harry Galbraith—who mailed in a clipping from a recent issue of the Denver *Post* that sent us scurrying to the files of old copies of *Adventure* to check the facts. The above-mentioned newspaper item, as written by *Post* staff writer Bernard Kelly, follows—

> The last living member of the American Legion in El Paso county is hale and hearty today, still carries his card and still wears his pin.
>
> He is Harry Galbraith, 64, veteran newspaperman, member of the Colorado Historical Society, and a profound believer in the horse's place in the too-mechanical world of today.
>
> But the American Legion he belongs to is not the present-day veterans' organization with millions of members. The American Legion he belongs to, and whose pin he wears, probably never had more than 50,000 members, all adventurers. But they were patriotic men, ready to go to battle for the United States of America "on a moment's notice."
>
> The American Legion Galbraith belongs to, according to his story, was "a body of about 50,000 men, organized by Teddy Roosevelt and Gen. Leonard Wood in 1914, when World War I broke out in Europe.
>
> "They were pledged to go on call, any time, day or night, for service at home or abroad," he said.
>
> The men's magazine "Adventure," became interested in the movement and became a prime mover in its promotion, with the result that word of the venturesome, patriotic band reached into the far corners of the earth.
>
> "Men came home from the Congo, the Yangtze, the Gobi desert and remote places everywhere to join," Galbraith said.
>
> When the United States entered the war in 1917 Roosevelt offered the services of the unit to President Wilson, but the offer was refused, and the organization disintegrated.
>
> Galbraith held on to his card and pin, however. He still has both. The pin, which he wears daily, is a round gold lapel button three-eighths of an inch in diameter. It contains a blue five-pointed star in a white field, surrounded by a red border.
>
> "The only other man in El Paso county who belonged, as far as I know," Galbraith said, "was the late James Gowdy, justice of the peace, who died last August. He once saw my pin and recognized it at once."
>
> Histories of Roosevelt's life make frequent mention of his "division" and his effort to get presidential consent to lead it in battle. None refers to the body as the American Legion, however.
>
> "Just the same, that was its name," Galbraith said. "That's the name on the membership card. Maybe the present Legion came by its name through somebody who was a member of Teddy's American Legion."

Our thanks to Mr. Galbraith for sending us this interesting story (and to the Denver *Post* for permission to reprint it here). Those original Legionnaires of T.R.'s "division" must have been true adventurers as well as patriots. And here's hoping Legionnaire Galbraith will be wearing that pin and carrying his membership card (see cut below) for a good many years to come!—K.W.G.



AMERICAN LEGION, INC.
10 BRIDGE STREET NEW YORK CITY

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT
Harry Rae Galbraith
HAS BEEN FOUND QUALIFIED AND IS ENROLLED AS SERVICE MEMBER NO. 1134 OF THE AMERICAN LEGION, INC., AND IS ENTITLED TO WEAR ITS INSIGNIA.

ATTEST:

SECRETARY

PRESIDENT

THE TRAIL AHEAD

It's a fascinating trail next month that winds from the sun-drenched land of Central Africa to the silent wastes of the frozen North, to the Far East and back across storm-tossed seas to our own great American West. . . . Come along for a thrilling voyage to the far corners of the world in the colorful pages of America's finest outdoor-fiction magazine for men. . . .

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An Unusual Story of Pearls and Pearl-Peeling on the New Guinea Coast

By CHARLES YERKOW

DESERT'S QUARRY

The Fast-Moving Yarn of a Border Pacific Payroll Stickup

By H. A. DeROSSO

Plus: "Re-Insurance 98%"—a fast story of a shipwreck off Newfoundland by that master of sea narrative, the late Albert Richard Wetjen . . . "Purp With A Purpose"—the waggish tale of a determined dog and a moody major of Philippine Scouts, by Edward Arthur Dolph . . . "Last Shot in Hell"—the true account of a rip-roarin' son of the West who not only died with his boots on but was buried standing up with a loaded rifle on his shoulder, by Harold Preece . . . Other exciting yarns and a fine cargo of features and departments—all in the big June issue of—

ON SALE MAY 11th

ASK ADVENTURE

Information You Can't Get Elsewhere

PROSPECTS for a prospector in Alaska.

Query:—I have done a lot of travelling and can get along anywhere. I like outdoor life and do not mind solitude, so I think that after I leave the Army I would like to try prospecting in Alaska. Can you tell me the best place for a lone, independent prospector to start out? What should I buy to outfit myself for this expedition, and approximately what would such an outfit cost? Can you suggest books about mining that would be helpful to me?

—Pvt. Donald J. Batchelder
Hq. Tr. 2nd Sq. 5th Cav.
APO 201, Unit 1

Reply by Victor Shaw:—I know Alaska well, having lived and prospected there for 13 years, part of the time just before World War II, and can recommend it for prospecting and mining unreservedly. It's a far better region than any part of the States, today. Only trouble: it costs more! For transportation, chiefly, as if you get your outfit in Seattle its cost is same as for going somewhere down here. It has one-fifth the area of U.S.A. and has been explored for minerals only in certain spots yet, and only 50 percent has been surveyed and mapped geologically, by the U.S.G.S.

So far as climate goes, climate along coastal areas as far up as Cook Inlet and Kodiak Island is about like that of Puget Sound, due to the north arm of the Japan Current that warms it all on the ocean side of the coast ranges. Most of the heavy rains you hear about are in the southern portion of the "Panhandle," from Ketchikan up to Skagway and north and west of there it rains less—like around Seattle. In interior regions there is only normal rain everywhere, and winter low temperatures are only in the interior and *north* of Seward and Anchorage. You'll get along O.K., being the sort of guy you say you are.

As to possible locations for commercial ores: the areas more easily reached have been prospected more or less since the Klondike days as you must realize, especially for quartz gold and gold placers; but until more recent years NOT by modern methods, for the earlier rock hounds and pan-shakers went at it blindly—"by guess and by Gawd." So, they overlooked plenty in a few places not so far inland. One such is along the upper part of Cook Inlet's west shore, from Mt. Illiamna and Mt. Redoubt on up to the mouth of Susitna River opposite Anchorage. I mean the streams flowing into the "Inlet" from the Aleutian Range that lies 10 to 20 miles back from the coast there. There's gold placer in many of those streams and their branches, but the coarsest gold is inland along the foothills in the upper portions of those streams. This for the reason that the heavier gold is dropped where the ground *flattens* off thus slackening the water velocity. Lighter gold is carried on for a little way and only "flour" is found nearer the coast. Get the idea? And, by the way, this goes for any gold-bearing creek or river.

And here's another hint: since all placer gold comes from a quartz-gold vein in near-by hills, if you find pay placer never overlook hunting the hillsides above it for the parent vein. Maybe it's rich ore.

There are many other localities down the panhandle strip of S. E. Alaska, from Skagway south including the numerous islands offshore, of which Prince of Wales, Baranoff, and Admiralty and Chichagoff are especially favorable, in places. I suggest however, that you pick some area among these named first, since it'll cost less, before you tackle those farther north or in the interior. And even the latter have been prospected more at that, along the Kobuk, Koyokuk, Chandalar rivers, and branch creeks flowing into the Yukon from Fortymile and Klondike on down to St. Michaels. Why? Because river travel is cheaper.

For places named above (say, Cook Inlet) you should have at least $500 for a summer's work, and $750 or $1,000 is safer. Areas north and inland need a grubstake *starting* at $1,000, at high prices nowadays.

Regarding outfit: it'll be the same as for the States, unless you go inland or north, where the clothing item will be different. But, the tools and camp outfit will be the same as anywhere. Of course foods for inland and northern areas are much condensed to save weight. Whereas in coastal regions, you can almost live on the country outside essential staples, as game and fish are plentiful, and easily secured.

Necessary tools won't cost (in Seattle) more than $18-$20 and probably less if you get some at a second-hand store, such as pick, shovel, miner's single-jack hammer etc. And for both lode and placer work they should include: a 12-inch goldpan, magnifying glass, 6-inch horseshoe magnet, a prospector's pick, 3-lb miner's pick, No. 2 round-point shovel, a ½-pint iron mortar and pestle to crush ore samples for panning, about two square feet of soft buckskin to squeeze excess mercury from amalgam, and a wire brush to scratch richest gold from bedrock seams. Should also have 2-3 lbs miner's mercury in proper small jug, and a 1-pint iron retort to take gold from amalgam leaving saleable bullion, also save the mercury.

Camp outfit will be same used in States: a tent, bedroll, cooking equipment, grub, rifle, trout tackle, compass, ax, one-man crosscut saw, rope, twine, assorted nails, notebook, pencils, camera, binoculars, a pair heavy hiking boots, woolen underwear and extra sox, and so on; a proper tent can be either an A-type, or better the new "umbrella type," with a waterproof tarpaulin for a ground sheet. In Alaska with plenty of wood fuel do open-air cooking, but a GI small pressure stove is useful if it rains. Costs about $7.50 down here. Umbrella tent about $12.50 at Army Surplus stores. Binoculars used for hunting and examining distant hill cliffs etc., for possible ore veins and so on.

You should also have map, first-aid kit, some books I'll mention, and some reports on area you're in of mineral resources, if possible by the Supt. of U. S. Geological Survey. A good map is the "Kroll Map," by Kroll Map Co., 2nd St., Seattle, sold for $1.00. Large scale detail maps of given areas issued by Director of U. S. G. S., Washington, D. C.

BOOKS: Get "A Handbook for Prospectors," by M. W. von Berenwitz, price $4.50 postpaid, sold by McGraw-Hill Book Co.; 330 W. 42nd St., N. Y. C. Or, get it nearer from Mineralogist Pub. Co.; 329 S. E. 32nd St.; Portland, Ore.

Also get "Prospecting and Operating Small Gold Placers" by Wm. F. Boericke, price $1.75 postpaid, sold by Mine and Smelter Supply Co., Box 5270, Denver, Colo.

In addition, I suggest you get an important book by Prof. Wilkerson titled: "Determinative Mineralogy for Alaskan Prospectors," used as a textbook by University of Alaska, priced at $1.25, and sold by the *Alaska Sportsman,* Ketchikan, Alaska, Editor Emery Tobin. You'll get special service by naming me, as I used to be on their staff.

Another excellent book is by Stephen Jacy, price $1.50 also sold by *Alaska Sportsman.* Jacy is an Alaska prospector, who wrote the information he gained at first-hand prospecting up there. It's O.K. I've always planned to issue a book myself, but never got around to it.

About taking a short course in rocks and minerals: it will be a great benefit to you, also in connection with the book concerning that subject mentioned just above by Prof. Wilkerson. Most universities the past 10-15 years have put in these short courses, and I'm thinking the Calif. University at Berkeley must have one, if you'll inquire there: maybe they'll give it free to a GI, if so.

At any rate, it'll be a big help because to find favorable areas to prospect, you have to know just what types of rock the various commercial ores occur in, as well as what the ores look like in veins on surface, etc. In such courses they have samples to study, and *that* is very essential. And if I can help further write me direct any time.

In closing I'll say by reading the books mentioned and, when you go, STICKING TO IT, you'll win success, for it sure is there for you—if you sabe enough to find it. No kidding!

NO SWELLED heads among the Jivaros.

Query:—I have read that there is a savage tribe of Indians in western South America that has a process of shrinking the severed heads of enemies killed in battle. I believe these heads are reduced down to about the size of a baseball, as I remember, though the features remain perfect in miniature. I'm wondering if you could tell me briefly how this is accomplished.

—C. M. Roach
Takoma Park, D. C.

Reply by Edgar Young:—The Indians you inquire about are the Jivaros of southern Ecuador, who were still practicing head-hunting when I was in that vicinity; but who now are said to have abandoned the practice except here and there and now and then in remote localities.

They raided neighboring tribes (Zaparos, Cururays, Napos, and others) under cover of night, and after stealthily landing their canoes they charged on the communal hut in which the whole population was sleeping, and in the resultant excitement killed every man, woman, or child they could lay hands on; then after cutting off the heads with a wooden macana, or steel machete, they rushed to their canoes and paddled swiftly away, halting midway home to prepare their trophies for the welcome and feast that awaited them at their home village.

A great deal of misunderstanding exists about these trophies, which are almost universally thought by people here in the U. S. and elsewhere to be shrunken heads with the bones and skull intact and that the Indians used some sort of magical process in shrinking them. The truth is that there are no bones inside as you can easily prove by examining one of the several which are in museums there in Washington and also in New York and Brooklyn.

Here is how the process was performed: Enroute home the Indians camped on a sandy river bank and immediately piled up piles of sand and built big bon-fires around and over them and while the sand was heating they skinned the scalp and face from the heads by making a slit upward at the back of the neck until the scalp and face could be yanked away from the bones, just like turning a sock inside out. The eyes were left in the skull and the facial skeleton was left intact. The scalp and face were then turned right-side out, the eye holes closed with stitches and the lips sewn together with three stitches, sinews or rawhide being used for thread. The back of the neck was also stitched together where it had been split. The whole party were in the act of preparing the heads, each warrior keeping his separate until the sand became hot enough; then they set about preparing them, by the simple process of filling them with hot sand and while they were full, by ironing them on the outside with hot rocks. After an hour or so of this the flesh and scalp had shrunk to about a third or fourth its former size, after having been constantly refilled with hot sand when the former sand became cool. They then embarked in their canoes and went on home where they drank chicha and danced until they wore themselves out. The trophies were just for this one celebration and when it was over they were tossed away to be played with by the children and pet monkeys, and sold to passing traders when they went up or down the Amazon. I have seen hundreds of them down there that have been bought by people in Ecuadorian villages, and I saw large collections in Guayaquil and Quito. Also, an American named Morley who lived at Huigra on the G&Q R.R., had over sixty in his collection which he had bought for a dollar or so each.

The country inhabited by these Indians are the lower stretches of the rivers running south from Ecuador and entering the Amazon where it swings around the big bend and heads east to Iquitos.

There is a damn good book in your public library dealing with these Indians and their habits, written by Upp de Graff, and (I think) published in London by Unwin. It is called "Among the Head-hunters." He is possibly embellishing the facts in a place or two but it is an interesting book to read for the country and setting, and the action is true to life.

HERE'S an interesting exchange of correspondence between Mr. Lewis Barton and our rifle expert Donegan Wiggins. The moral still seems to be: Take it easy with those souvenir firearms!

Friend Wiggins: Have just been reading my November issue of *Adventure* Magazine, my favorite magazine since 1912, and I always read the "Ask Adventure" department first.

I read the letter from Mr. C. K. Parker of Eastman, Ga., to you regarding cartridges for his Japanese 6.5 rifle.

And I read your reply to him, truly a discouraging reply to a fellow who has a rifle he is anxious to try out.

I hate to differ with you, friend Wiggins, but in the interest of good sport I must in this case.

A Mr. J. R. Pittillo of Crowell, Texas makes a cartridge that is giving good results in the Japanese 6.5 rifle. He makes them from the 220 Swift case, soft point, and loads with 129 grains powder. He sells them for $4.50 for a box of twenty. Express charges paid by the buyer.

While I have never personally fired these shells, I know of persons who have and say they have given satisfaction. Mr. Pittillo has a Federal license.

I am writing Mr. C. K. Parker and tell-him of this man before he gets around to the point of throwing his 6.5 rifle in the nearest creek.

Trusting you will not feel offended at my presumption, I am yours sincerely,

—Lewis O. Barton
Clifton, Texas

Dear Mr. Barton: In response to your recent letter, I'll say I am not in the least put out by its contents; guncranks like to compare conclusions, you know. I'm a Life Member of the National Rifle Association, so you can readily see from that that I like arms.

Now, back to the Nip rifles; I do everything possible to discourage the use of these arms. A local man is resizing .30 M1 shells, and reloading and selling same for the 6.5 MM Nambu rifle, but I don't tell anyone of that fact. We have seen several of these that actually had CAST RECEIVERS in place of forged and machine ones; we wonder how long such things will hold together under actual firing.

The pre-war rifles seem to have been accurate weapons, from what the lads who were under fire by snipers in the Islands have told me, but the war-time made ones don't look so good. I think they carried manufacturing methods to a new low in safety margins, from my observations of the rifles.

Now, the following firm advertises that they will be able to supply the 6.5 MM Arisaka ammo later this fall.

Stoegers, Inc., 507 Fifth Ave., New York, N. Y. Imported loading, of course. They are larger dealers of foreign ammo than any other I know of.

BUT, why will the boys experiment with the foreign weapons, when members of the N.R.A. can purchase excellent Springfield .30 caliber Model 1903's for the M1 ammo. from the government at $15? It's beyond me. Sincerely,

—Donegan Wiggins

SHELBY'S "Mules."

Query:—Can you tell me where I can find a detailed account of the journey made to Mexico by General Joe Shelby's Confederate cavalry after Lee's surrender? My maternal grandfather was one of the "Shelby mules" as they were called by the Feds because of their superhuman endurance. It must have been some trip from the little I remember him telling me—hunger, thirst, Indians and hell all the way.

—Bruce Venable
Port Chicago, Calif.

Reply by Col. R. G. Emery:—I'll begin with the bibliography you requested.

"Noted Guerillas, or The Warfare of the Border," J. N. Edwards, published in St. Louis by Bryan, Brand & Co. in 1877. *(very good).*

"Shelby's Mexican Expedition" from the Dictionary of American History, Charles Scribner's Sons, NYC, 1942. (most available).

Also "Shelby and His Men; or the War in the West" Miami Print. & Pub. Co., Cincinnati, O., 1867 [Edwards, supra]

That's about the list, so far as I know it. However, I'll tell you what little *I* know.

After the downfall of the Confederacy in '65, Gen. Joseph O. Shelby, one of the ablest of the surviving Confederate cavalry leaders, rather than surrender called upon his men to follow him to Mexico and join him in offering his saber to Maximilian.

One thousand accepted the invitation, including such men as General John B. Magruder, E. Kirby-Smith. T. S. Hindman, C. M. Wilcox and Governors Murrah of Texas, Morehead of Kentucky and Allen of Louisiana. They crossed the Rio Grande at Eagle Pass, Texas, on July 4th, 1865, pausing there long enough to bury their Confederate flag with suitable honors. Across the river, at Piedras Negras, they sold 4 cannon for enough to purchase supplies, and began fighting their way across northern Mexico on their route to Monterrey. The opposition was mostly guerrilla, led by officers of Juarez'.

At Monterrey, the command broke into many pieces, groups going to Canada, Honduras, Sonora, and some even joining the French regulars. Shelby, with the remnants, marched to Mexico City. Maximilian, weak and vacillating as always, refused Shelby's offer, fearing U. S. displeasure. The Empress Carlotta gratefully offered some land (the whereabouts is obscure) and they attempted to establish a colony there. Maximilian's overthrow and execution made the project untenable after June, 1867, and most of the exiles straggled back to the U. S., or disappeared.

A SHIPMENT of *Triatoma Porcata.*

Query:—I am sending, attached, a package containing two insects, nocturnal and blood-thirsty. They are new to me and I thought I knew all the biting and stinging varieties. Anyway, I would appreciate anything you have on them; what they are and how do you lick 'em.

—Vincent Elliott
Hilt, Siskiyou Co., Calif.

Reply by Dr. S. W. Frost:—The bugs you sent recently are known by various common names such as "blood-sucking conenose", "big bed bug" and "China bed bug." To the scientist they are known as *Triatoma porcata.*

These bugs occasionally invade houses or more commonly attack campers. Normally they occur in the nests of the wood rat. They occasionally attack man, producing a severe bite but are generally not considered fatal. They are also known to transmit a disease from rats to man. The patient develops nausea, rapid breathing, heart beat and pulse. This is followed by marked inflammation of the skin and a considerable stinging sensation. These symptoms develop only if the bug is carrying the disease. Otherwise only a serious transitory stinging effect results.

This is a western species which ranges eastward to Utah and south into Mexico. I have not met with this fellow personally although I have seen specimens in various collections. I have had experience with a Central and South American species which transmits a very serious disease known as

chagas fever. I have also had experience with *Triatoma sanguisuga* which probably inflicts as serious a bite as the species you have in California. I agree with you that they are blood-thirsty beasts.

Once while camping in Okefinokee swamp Georgia I received many bites from these bugs. For two days I suffered with high fever, terrific headache and was generally uncomfortable.

To lick these pests, avoid places where they are known to occur. If sleeping outdoors, do not sleep directly on a canvas cot but use thick bedding. Some of the newer repellents such as Dimethylthalate should also help.

SEXTANTS for sea and air.

Query:—Are those bubble sextants as advertised in different magazines any good? Can they be used for marine use? They are surplus from Army aircraft. Are a chronograph and a chronometer the same? I saw a chronograph for $29.75. I was under the impression a good chronometer cost $100 or more. Is there anywhere in the state of Washington a person with a grade school education can go to learn navigation? I can and have run fishing boats all over the inland water of Alaska, can go and come at will and ease, and have never piled a boat up. But that won't get me a pilot's license. Can read a chart and set a course, but have never used a sextant.

—Melvin H. Dudley
Norman, Ark.

Reply by C. B. Lemon:—I gather from your letter that you are anxious to obtain a Coastwise Pilot's License. I do not know offhand of any school of navigation, privately run, in Washington state. Why not look into the possibilities of the California State School Ship? It is not necessary to be a licensed mariner to obtain a Coast Pilot's License, however. Write to Steamboat Inspector Service, U.S.C.G., Customs House, Seattle, Washington, for a copy of Pilot Rules for Coast and Inland Water and it will give you the requirements necessary for such a pilot license.

I could not say if the bubble sextants advertised for sale are any good or not. If new, they would undoubtedly be in good condition, and if they were surplus property, they would no doubt still be good, but a thorough check by a competent person would be desirable. Bubble sextants are primarily for aviation use.

There is quite a difference between a chronograph and a chronometer. A good chronometer by a reputable maker is expensive. A good used one can also be found and if purchased should be checked before using. A chronograph measures and *reads* time and velocity of projectiles. A chronometer is an instrument which measures time with great accuracy.

MANGAREVA in French Oceania.

Query:—I have been wondering lately about a few of the islands of the South Seas, and I am hoping you can be of help to me. I am particularly interested in learning something about the Island of Mangareva, located just above the Tropic of Capricorn, between 130-140 degrees west longitude—its history, people, climate, geography, etc. Why is it listed on some maps as "Is. Gambier?" Where can I locate a good map of Mangareva, as well as the entire group to which it belongs? How would I go about getting permission to land there, and how would I travel to it?

My other group of questions deals with a subject about which you must have been questioned many times. Despite all the hocum which has been written and filmed about those lush South Sea islands with their fabulous belles and wonderful climate, I have heard that there are some very much like these tales. Norfolk Island, about which you recently wrote in *Adventure*, seems to be one of these spots. Are there others?

If you were going to live on one of these isles, which would it be? Why? What is it like? Please list about 3-5 such places: their climate, geography, people, outstanding advantages or disadvantages. I realize this is a big order, but I hope you can handle it.

—Kenneth R. Kurtz
Weston, W. Va.

Reply by William McCreadie:—Since you are particularly interested in Mangareva: the Gambier archipelago is an administrative group of French Oceania (capital, Papeete) and consists of elevated islands like Mangareva and many atolls. Mangareva has an area of six square miles and a native population of about 500. White residents are a gendarme, his wife, and two priests. It is mountainous. Rikitea, the pretty village, contains a Catholic church with a remarkable oil painting. Three Tahitian trading firms are established on the island. There is good fishing, an ideal climate, and plenty of fruit and breadfruit. There is a wireless station. It is frequently visited by inter-island schooners, and it is often possible to get passage on one of them from Papeete. However, the French Government imposes many restrictions on the would-be tourist. (You could get information on these regulations from the French Consulate in New York.) Inquire at a travel bureau for sailing dates of ships for Tahiti.

All Pacific islands have strict regulations regarding tourists, usually requiring that return fare be deposited in advance.

The map issued by the National Geographic Society is the best guide to the Pacific.

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(Continued from page 69)

"You know about that?"

"I know all about it—charter juggling, promotin' a shipyard strike, even—though I can't swear to it—startin' a small fire in the *Islander*. And he's done the same with other ships! I'll sign a statement—if you'll bear a hand at helpin' me keep my ticket."

The *Islander* was ranging alongside now.

"All right, skipper?" Lane called anxiously.

"I'm fine!" Dan answered. "And so are you! Stand by!"

He climbed down to the deck.

Colmar lifted his head. "I'll settle, handsomely," he said hoarsely. "This can still be smoothed out."

Dan ignored him.

The lifeboat from the sizable freighter swept up on the side opposite the *Islander*. The dyspeptic Yankee skipper himself swarmed up on deck, blood in his eye and an automatic pistol in his hand. Dan met him.

"Here's the buoy shifter and a man who wants to make a statement," he said, standing above the silent Colmar. "Will you handle it, Captain Slocum, till the Coast Guard gets here? I'm a biased party—I'm going to sue this smooth gent, in jail or out, for doing his best to wreck my ship."

"He'll be in the pen or my name ain't Slocum," the freighter captain said. "Hell's bells! It might ha' been my ship that piled on that reef! What's his game, anyway?"

"Selling a ship to one sucker after another," Dan said succinctly. "Getting her back for nothing because the suckers didn't have enough money to fight him and hang on. But that's not the worst!"

"What's the rest?"

Dan glanced across at his ship, with his crew, like awed children, lined up along the rail.

"What's the rest, Captain?" Slocum repeated.

"Stealing the heart right out of a good man's chest," Dan said. "For that he'll pay. And meanwhile my mate, all hands and I will be making ourselves a mess of luck in the shipping business."

THE END

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(Continued from page 87)

of juice about three o'clock, and I get ready for him to shove me, or wipe his hands on me, or something. I can tell, almost to the second, when he will turn around. He is almost ready when something flies past my ear like a bullet, hits Mike "WHUMP!" on the back, and goes right back past my ear again.

Before I can breathe, Mike gags and goes "WHOOOSH!" and Mike's cheek full of juice and cud flies all over everything. And Holy Moses is jumping past me, sticking his hand in his pocket and yelling.

"Hannigan!" he yells. "Hannigan, you spit tobacco juice on my floor. You spit tobacco juice on my clean floor!"

"I couldn't help it," says Mike, gulping. "He," he points at me. "That punk hit me on the back. And on purpose, too."

"That's a lie," says Holy Moses. "I was standing right behind Eddie. He didn't raise his hand. He didn't even raise his head. You spit on my clean floor, Hannigan. Do you spit on the floor at home?"

Everybody is tittering and laughing at Mike. He can't take it. He raises his big fist and says, "You can't talk that way to me, you sawed-off ape."

Mike is going to slug him. I know he is. There are a lot of big guys in the shop, but they don't move. Mary picks on me.

"Eddie!" she yells. "Help Mr. Murphy. For heaven's sake, don't let that big clown . . ."

I have never had a redheaded woman appeal to me that way before. I jump around, knock Holy Moses aside and catch Mike's clumsy right fist on my left arm. Then I nail him. He flies back and hits the wall and slides down and sits there looking at me. I have never felt so good in my life, but my feet want to run. Mike will get up and kill me.

And Mary has to keep yelling, "Good boy, Eddie! Good boy. Go ahead. Sock him again."

"Get up, Mike," somebody says. "Get up and fight." I am very surprised to find out it is me talking.

Mike feels his jaw. "You lay off me, Eddie Crosby," he says. "I don't want any

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trouble with you. You're always picking on me."

"You bum," says Holy Moses and walks around me and grabs Mike's collar and lifts that big hulk like he was a feather and shakes him good. Seeing that, I know how those rumors got around about Holy Moses being tough. That little man is strong as an ox and he no more needed my help than he needed advice on how to run his business. I can't understand what Mary was so worried about.

Holy Moses pulls a postal card out of his pocket and fishes out a ten buck bill and hands them to Mike.

"There you are, Hannigan," he says. "I knew you wouldn't last around here. I didn't even put your name on the payroll. Take this card back to the USES and tell them I'm full up."

Mike takes off his apron and packs his tools and starts out, walking a wide circle around me. When he is about twenty feet away, Holy Moses takes his hand out of his pocket and throws. That rubber ball of his hits Mike between the shoulders and bounces right back into Holy Moses' hand. Mike don't even look back. He just walks faster.

"You see," says Holy Moses. "You can do it, once you make up your mind. You can do anything."

He is right. There comes the time when I run into his office and lay two cigars on his desk.

"It's happened," I yell at him. "It's happened and Mary is O.K."

"Congratulations, son," he says. "But you ought to be more thrifty. One cigar is enough for one baby."

"Sure," I tell him. "But we got two. Twins. Didn't you tell me once that anything I could do, Mary could do twice as good? Well. Two little redheads. Can't tell them apart. They're as pretty as die castings that came out of a mold you made yourself."

That tickles him pink. He grabs the phone and dials a number and says, "Burt? I got just the man for you. Eddie Crosby. He'll make you a good superintendent. He not only knows his business, but he seems to know how to get the most out of a situation. I'll send him right over. Don't mention it, Burt. Goodbye."

THE END

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(Continued from page 61)

war cry rose above rushing feet in the passage. Again Jeffrey let the pack slip away from my mouth and nostrils; he whirled about with gun uplifted as the door snapped inward and an avalanche of black bodies plunged through. Jeffrey fired, but the two Zulus who fell made no hole in that rushing mass. Outside I could hear the guards yelling, Captain Hongward loudest of all. The Zulus had got the Lizard's message that the white *wonder dokter* was butchering their *Baas* friend, Son of the Yellow-Maned One.

With a fanatical roar they drove Jeffrey into a corner while the guards struggled to get through, unaware of what the riot was about. For an instant the Kaffirs wavered as Jeffrey raised the empty gun, crying out he was a witch doctor who would bring death to them all.

"*Bulala! Bulala!* Kill! Kill!" they howled in answer, rushed him and hurled him to the floor, then jumped upon him and trampled the last breath from his body. They were dancing on the prostrate form and about it when Hongward and the compound guards squeezed through.

"Go easy on them, Captain," I said weakly. "They killed a murderer. Jeffrey was the compound-runner. The Dawson diamond is on his body."

Their vengeance satisfied, the blacks yielded to the guards. A little Cape brandy brought me around. It was hard for the captain to believe the macabre story at first, until we had checked up. Buchara was inside man, aided by a handful of Kaffirs, one of whom had got the big diamond from the piece of pipe used in the yard riot, delivering it to Jeffrey, gate runner. Buchara had used the sjambok on blacks who threatened to squeal. Flavin the Greek was the outside fence of the I. D. B. syndicate. We went to the Kaffir burial plot that night in time to catch Flavin exhuming the body of the Zulu lashed and murdered the day before, taking the divekeeper red-handed with a half pint of diamonds.

I held my job, with a bonus of five hundred pounds from the G. M. for recovering the Big Shining Stone—and a month's hunting trip with Marcia for plugging the compound leak.

THE END

(Continued from page 49)

when they came out of that one, they came out together.

That last mile or so of homestretch seemed a million and one to me. I couldn't see very well because the sun was on the water and the two boats were like bugs scooting across a lake of fire. But I could hear 'em coming, and after a bit I could see them better, going all out, bow to bow. And a few seconds later I saw something else; smoke, in sharp, black splotches.

"I told you," Jock raved. "She's caving in."

But she wasn't. Not *Nell.* The smoke was from Check, streaming away in long pennants; pennants which seemed to grab and hold him. For a hundred yards from the final gun he settled and died and Chugger loped over the line.

JOCK was still white and barely able to stand when *Nell* gasped into the pits. Chugger sat back in the cockpit, rubbing his arms and smiling.

"You look like you had some kind of a scare," he said to Jock.

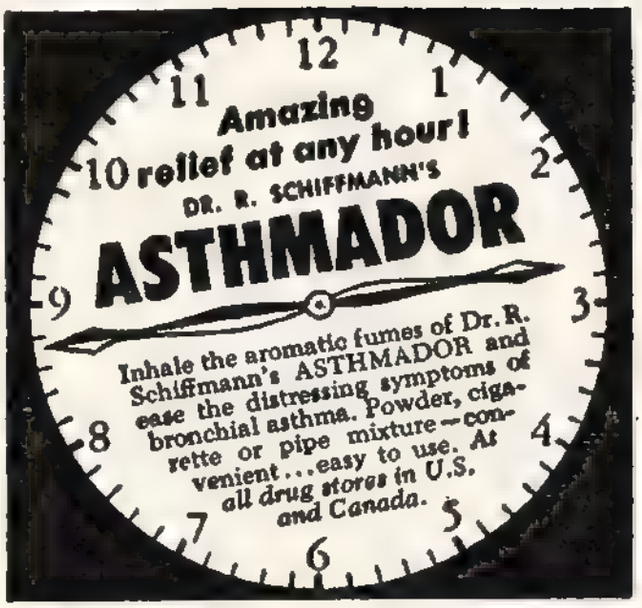
"Just fifteen thousand dollars worth," Jock said. He blenched at the thought, and sat down on the fuel can again.

Chugger removed the derby and mopped the spray from his face.

"You should have told me," he said. "As it was I had to pick it up from Check last night when I was about to take *Typhoon* back to the Yard. I didn't know you had a bet with him, so when he asked me where I was going I told him all the trouble I'd had with the boat, and seeing as how he's a competitor I spread it on a little thicker than what was really the case. And I told him too, that we'd had a big brawl about the whole thing and that we were hardly on speaking terms with each other."

"Which is just about the case," Jock said.

"Knowing how Check likes his booze," Chugger went on, "we had a couple of drinks, and then he got real confidential and told me about the bet, and said he was glad about *Typhoon* because it seemed his boat had sprung a few bugs which he thought he'd ironed out; running too hot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because of the rough water, and he didn't want to push her too hard. So we had another drink or so and I asked him would it be O.K. if I drove *Nell* in the last heat so I didn't ruin *Typhoon* completely. He was real generous about it and said sure. He never figured I'd work a sleeper in on him, and by the time he found out it was too late and he burned up his boat like I figured he would; she and *Typhoon* being sister-ships, and thereby having ailments in common."

Chugger clucked and shook his head about the matter.

"You took a hell of a chance," Jock said. "I thought sure as hell that blower would tear *Nell's* deck right off."

Chugger's eyes caressed the shining mahogany.

"Some boats are like people," he said fondly. He looked up at Jock. "You gave me the idea for transferring the blower, you know."

Jock looked startled.

"You got talking about my grandmother full of whiskey. Maybe you didn't know I had a grandmother. She never drank any whiskey, but on her golden wedding she drank a whole quart of champagne and then spent the rest of the night dancing us young folks right into the floor. She was quite some lady. Of course," he added thoughtfully, "she spent the next three days flat on her back in bed."

Jock's mouth was sagging a little at this point.

"So, I figured if Grandma could take it, *Nell* could take it; just for a little while, a couple of laps. Just enough to sneak up on sleepy Lamont."

"I'll be damned," Jock said. He said it again and pranced around on the wet planks a bit. He stopped and smiled at Chugger.

"I'm going to give you a nice cut of that money," he said. "Yes, sir, I certainly am."

Chugger flipped his hand in a careless gesture.

"You don't have to do that. I got a couple of friends here to place a little bet with Check last night. Soon's they tow him in I'll get it from him. He don't know it's mine," he said thoughtfully. "And I don't think he's gonna like it."

THE END

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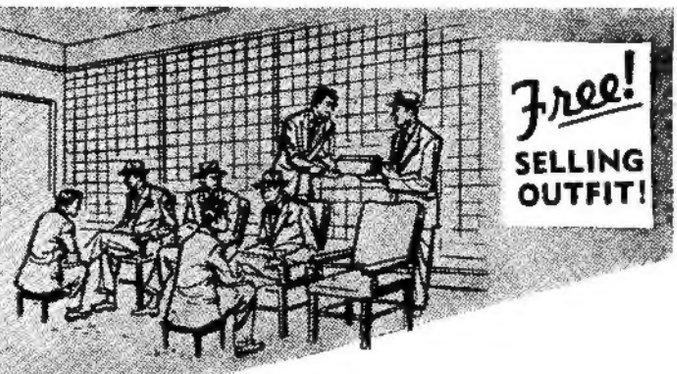

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